THE CHILD SUPPORT GRANT IN KWAZULU-NATAL: UNDERSTANDING ADMINISTRATION AND HOUSEHOLD ACCESS

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BF	Battlefields
CPS	Cash Paymaster Services
CSG	Child Support Grant
DG	Disability Grant
DM	Durban Metro
FCG	Foster Care Grant
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ID	Identity document
KI	Key informant
KIDS	KwaZulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study
ML	Midlands
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OAP	Old Age Pension
PC	Pension committee
PCG	Primary caregiver
RTHC	Road to Health Card
SC	South Coast
ZU1	Zululand (locality1)
ZU2	Zululand (locality 2)

1 INTRODUCTION

According to one estimate, about two-thirds of South African children under the age of 14 are eligible for the Child Support Grant (CSG) (Budlender, Rosa and Hall, 2005, as cited in Leatt, Rosa and Hall, 2005:33). The CSG is a monthly payment by the South African government of R200, currently available to primary caregivers (PCGs) – usually the biological mother of the child but also non-biological caregivers such as a grandmother, aunt or other of children under the age of 14.[1] It is targeted through a means test towards poor PCGs who, together with their partners, earn below a minimum level of income.[2] Calculations using SOCPEN data for the months April 2003 to March 2004 show that nationally 71.3 percent of poor and 98 percent of ultra-poor children aged 0 to six were receiving the grant (Leatt, 2004:8-9). This age group of poor children had been eligible for the grant since its inception in 1998, and coverage is relatively high for this group. In April 2003 grant eligibility was extended to children under the age of nine, and by March 2004, 61 percent of poor and 85 percent of ultra-poor seven and eight year olds were receiving the CSG (Leatt, 2004:10).

Early research on the grant focused on the implementation, administration and accessibility of the grant (Kola *et al*., 2000; Lloyd, 2000). Later work on the administration of the grant has looked at the extension of the CSG using administrative and other data (see Leatt, 2003; Leatt, 2004; Rosa and Mpokotho, 2004) and on the implementation of the CSG more generally (Goldblatt, Rosa and Hall, 2006), using information from qualitative research. Budlender, Rosa and Hall (2005) have calculated the costs associated with applying the means test for the CSG (Leatt, Rosa and Hall, 2005). All of this research has mainly served a monitoring function.

This paper aims to add to and enhance what is already known about the administration of the CSG by providing information from qualitative research conducted in six study areas in KwaZulu-Natal. Some of the relevant findings from the papers cited above will be included in the text for comparative purposes. In this study detailed information provided by CSG recipients is the chief source of information, on a number of aspects relating to CSG receipt. Detailed accounts from recipients about their experiences with the grant, should fill a gap in the literature on the CSG. While KwaZulu-Natal has one of the highest poverty shares of all the provinces, at the time of the 2004 KIDS qualitative study it was one of the provinces with the lowest percentages of poor children aged seven and eight (to whom the grant had recently been extended) in receipt of the CSG (Rosa and

[1] At the time of this research, only children under 11 were eligible for the grant, although this had only been the case for two months by the start of the fieldwork period, and therefore the bulk of the children eligible were under the age of nine, the age eligibility that had been in place before this time. Moreover, the value of the grant was R170 when the study took place.

[2] R800 in urban areas and if the applicant lives in a formal dwelling, and R1100 in rural areas (if the applicant lives in a formal or informal dwelling) and informal settlements (if the applicant lives in an informal dwelling) (Hunter, 2004:23).

Mpokotho, 2004). This makes it a pertinent site for an analysis of the administration of the grant. Another paper – Hunter and Adato, 2007 – uses research information provided by the same CSG recipients, may be read in parallel to this paper, and will be referred to throughout this paper.

To begin we outline the research methodology employed in the qualitative study. We then hone in on the findings from the qualitative study, starting with a profile of the study households. Next we describe how and what CSG recipients learn about the grant, and how they perceive what it represents. The documents required for a CSG application, and the obstacles in obtaining them are then underscored, before the focus shifts to the application process for the CSG. The reflections of recipients on the fairness of the distribution of CSG funding are then given, followed by an outline of the grant payments process. Finally, conclusions are drawn.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this report a number of pieces of information will be used. The central material used will be qualitative information received from 24 CSG recipients living in 20 households in six study areas across KwaZulu-Natal.[3] In addition, information obtained from key informant (KI) interviews conducted with pension committee (PC) members and others in these six study areas, and information from 10 welfare office interviews conducted in late 2003 by one of the authors will be included, where relevant, in order to obtain some perspective from others involved in welfare grant administration on these same issues (this information will be drawn from Hunter (2004) and from additional original interview material). Finally, findings from the KIDS 2004 survey will also be reflected.[4] This information will be drawn from Woolard, Carter and Agüero (2005). KIDS is a panel survey of about 1,100 households within 67 clusters in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, surveyed in 1993, 1998 and 2004.

Thirty-six households across six research sites in KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa were extensively visited between June 2004 and March 2005 by three fieldworkers as part of the qualitative component of the 2004 KIDS. Two urban and four rural KIDS clusters (the former located within the geographical regions of Battlefields and Durban Metro; the latter within Midlands, South Coast and Zululand) were selected using a careful, purposive process. Information collected in preparation for KIDS 2004 was used to select the study sites. The clusters selected were stratified on the following variables: (1) rural/urban; (2) geographical spread within the province; (3) degree and types of

[3] In this report, as in Woolard, Carter and Agüero (2005), the following terminology will be used. CSG recipient refers to the person to whom the grant is paid. The beneficiary of the grant is the child in respect of whom the grant is paid. The primary caregiver or PCG is the *de facto* person responsible for the day-to-day care of the child. The 24 CSG recipients who were interviewed for the qualitative study will be referred to as study respondents or recipients.

[4] 'Clusters' or research sites refer to census units used for the 1993 survey, and are not communities *per se*, with differentiation within clusters.

activities (mainly presence but also absence) pertaining to the four research themes (described below); (4) whether they had been part of another qualitative study linked to KIDS in 2001 (the Socio-Economic Study of the Persistence of Poverty and Inequality); (5) whether they were a part of the Political Economy of Social Capital study (another qualitative study linked to KIDS 2004); and (6) whether the fieldworkers would be safe from a security standpoint. Telephone interview information obtained from local leaders in the KIDS clusters was used to provide information on (3) and (6).

Within each cluster six households were selected – a small number but one which allowed data of sufficient depth to be collected on the research themes. The following themes were adopted for study in these households: 'care', 'orphans', 'livelihoods', 'the Child Support Grant' (CSG), and 'changing household structure'. The first household selection criterion was that households be part of KIDS 2004, as an aim was to compare qualitative and quantitative data. The second criterion was that households contain a pair of conditions to enable data collection on two of the above four themes, apart from the 'changing household structure' theme, which was covered in all households. To begin, a mini-survey that contained information on all themes was conducted in all KIDS households in each cluster.

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from various local leaders, for the six research sites chosen for the study. After explaining the background and purpose of the study and assuring confidentiality, consent was obtained from the six case study households in each cluster. Ethical clearance for the 2004 KIDS was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.[5]

A 'modified' extended case study method was chosen.[6] Each fieldworker lived in two clusters for two one-month periods, and travelled between the two clusters at intervals.[7] Repeated visits were carried out to study households, and formal and informal interviews and discussions were conducted with different household members. Ethnographic techniques were used, including interviewing, household events mapping[8], and observing and participating in activities related to the topics of the research, both at the household and community level. The purpose of these methods was to build trust and rapport with households, and to observe and learn in a way that is not possible with more rapid

[5] Grocery packs including staple foods such as maize meal and morvite porridge, were given to each study household as an acknowledgement of their time spent participating in the study.

[6] The term 'modified' was used because the period in the field and the period with each case study household was shorter than is most often the case using an 'extended case method' (Burawoy, 1998). Moreover, fairly structured interview guides were developed for each of the research themes, primarily because of the low level of experience of the fieldworkers with the ethnographic method, and fieldworkers were trained in their use.

[7] The fieldworkers were first language Zulu speakers. Training in ethnographic methodology was undertaken by all fieldworkers.

[8] Household Events Mapping is a research method developed by Adato, Lund and Mhlongo (2007) through a qualitative study of the KIDS sample conducted in 2001 (the Socio-Economic Study of the Persistence of Poverty and Inequality), where interviewing is combined with participatory, visual methods to trace events over time, stimulate recall, and engage the participation of different household members.

research methods (Adato and Roopnaraine, 2004). Extensive note-taking, and elaboration on fieldnotes after household visits, occurred in the field. This material was then typed up when the fieldworkers returned to Durban between field visits. It is important to note that, because no tape recording was used, quotations included in this report are not verbatim quotes but the closest approximation of quotes based on interview notes. For this reason, often quotes are made in the third person – it is actually a quotation of the fieldworkers' account of the statement.[9]

As a result of purposive sampling, three of the households in each cluster contained at least one CSG recipient.[10] In all, information on the CSG was gathered from 24 CSG recipients in 20 households. In 18 qualitative study households there was no specific information gathered on the CSG theme and grant receipt has been considered in these households in later sections of this report. In the mini-survey, questions were asked in order to identify CSG recipients, in particular, whether someone in the household receives the CSG, the age and sex of the person, whether the person lives in the household, and how many CSGs they receive. Information was also obtained about the age and sex of the child beneficiaries, their relationship to the CSG recipient, and whether the child lives in the household or not. This information was obtained from all CSG recipients in the household. It was then used to select households with a variety of sizes and structures with regard to recipients and beneficiaries. Household members were identified using a 'household tree' method. Drawings of households were undertaken at the beginning of the fieldwork periods, using a broad definition to take into account everyone who contributes to or draws resources away from the household. This method was developed by Adato, Lund and Mhlongo (2007) in response to perceived inadequacies in the KIDS 1998 survey definition of household membership for identifying members and explaining household poverty and well-being.

The bulk of the qualitative material obtained is interview information from one or more CSG recipient(s) within each study household. In addition, fieldworkers undertook observations within households and on pay days on which at least two CSG recipients within each study area were accompanied to their pay point. On these pay days the CSG recipients were also asked specific questions relating to CSG spending.[11] It should be emphasized that the information collected is not intended to be representative of the situation in KwaZulu-Natal. However, the study areas were scattered around the

[9] The interview material has also been edited for clarity of reading, though staying as close to the material as possible. In addition, all names have been changed for the sake of confidentiality and all material relating to identity has been placed in secure storage.

[10] Two CSG recipients in the Durban Metro locality moved out of their household to take up work opportunities after the first month of fieldwork had been completed, although information was obtained from them when they visited their respective households during the second month of fieldwork.

[11] Fieldworkers were also encouraged to undertake group discussions within households between the CSG recipient, another adult in the household who was not receiving the CSG and another person in the household who received an income, in order to get a more nuanced understanding of various issues relating to the CSG, and the perspectives of different people in the household, with respect to sex, age, and relationship to the PCG. However, due to time constraints in the field, this information was not obtained. Instead, in two of the study households an additional household member provided information on CSG receipt in the household, and in an urban area a key informant who also received the CSG was interviewed.

province, and where there is a fair amount of consistency across the case it is likely that one will encounter similar findings in other parts of the province.

Key informant or KI interviews were conducted with a PC member in five of the six clusters. A PC is a committee usually consisting of grant recipients at community level who liase between the community and the local welfare office about issues and problems to do with social grants. Members are usually Old Age Pension (OAP) recipients, although PCs are beginning to include CSG recipients and assist with these grants as well. Key informant information on the CSG is also included from the head of a Drop-In Centre and a home-based caregiver. Information from other community members – gathered as part of the ethnographic approach – has also been included. For instance, information obtained from discussions in a local tavern and at pay points.

This qualitative study information – both household and key informant – was coded using NVivo, and reports were generated from which themes were drawn and matrices of information compiled.

3 FINDINGS FROM THE 2004 KIDS QUALITATIVE STUDY

This section presents the findings from the KIDS 2004 qualitative study – this includes household interviews, key informant interviews, pay day and other household and community observations. This data is supplemented by secondary sources based on interviews with welfare officials from 10 welfare offices across KwaZulu-Natal (conducted in late 2003) and as reported in Hunter (2004). In addition, where relevant, information from the KIDS 2004 quantitative survey will be reflected, as reported by Woolard, Carter and Agüero (2005).

3.1 CSG receipt in study households

In all, 24 CSG recipients living in 20 households were interviewed for the study, although only 19 of the households were CSG study households.[12] All CSG recipients in the study were female, reflecting the fact that the overwhelming majority of recipients in general are female. Using data from the Department of Social Development's grant

[12] While 19 households were initially selected, a further interview was conducted in one urban cluster with another CSG recipient – a home-based caregiver who was interviewed as a key informant for another component of the study. Therefore information obtained from eight recipients in urban areas and 16 recipients in rural areas is included as part of the qualitative study. For one rural CSG household the grandmother who received the grant on behalf of her grandchild was the recipient, but she died over the fieldwork period and further information was obtained from the mother of the child who lived in another household, and had received the grant money from the grandmother before her death. It should be noted that CSG recipients who receive the grant and are recorded as recipients of the grant on the welfare system do not always spend the money – two recipients in the study gave the money to the mother of the child beneficiary.

administration system, SOCPEN, Leatt (2004:21) finds that less than 1.5 percent of children who are registered for a CSG have men as the recipient of the grant, while in KwaZulu-Natal, 98 percent of CSG recipients are women. Twenty of the CSG recipients in our study were mothers of the children on whose behalf they were receiving the grant, while four of the CSG recipients were grandmothers of the beneficiary children. Leatt (2004:21) finds similarly that 92.5 percent of recipients of the grant are the biological parent of the child, while the remaining 7.5 percent of recipients are not a biological parent of the child. For KwaZulu-Natal the figure is slightly higher: 10.3 percent of recipients are not the biological parent of the child (Leatt, 2004:22). Moreover, 76.5 percent of the recipients nationally are unmarried, 18 percent are married and 4.5 percent are widows (Leatt, 2004:20-21).

Mother recipients ranged in age from 20 to 46, while grandmother recipients ranged in age from 54 to 70. In two households a mother and her daughter were accessing the grant on behalf of their own children; in another household three generations were receiving the grant: a grandmother for two of her grandchildren, a mother for her other child, and a daughter for her own child.

In all there were 32 beneficiary children: 13 female and 16 male beneficiary children who ranged in age from one to nine.[13] Most households (17) contained only one beneficiary child. In four households there were two beneficiary children. Two households contained four beneficiary children, while in one household there were three.

It is important to distinguish between who the recipient of the grant is and who the PCG of the beneficiary child is. Unlike with survey data, with a qualitative ethnographic methodology it is possible to say with relative certainty who the PCG is as the fieldworker is able to verify verbal information received and supplement this with observed information. For 20 of the beneficiary children in our study the mother was the PCG of the child. For five of the beneficiary children the grandmother was the only PCG – in two of these cases the mother was non-resident but received the grant money from the CSG recipient; for two children the mother was dead; for one child the mother lived next door and received the CSG money from the recipient who was also the PCG. For five of the children both the mother and the grandmother were the PCGs of the children: in one household there were four beneficiary children and the grandmother looked after the children during the day while the mothers were able to play a caregiving role when they returned from work; in another household the mother of the child was ill with HIV/AIDS and was not always able to look after her child – when this was the case the grandmother played a caregiving role.

Households in the study constituted a variety of sizes and structures. The smallest household was one in which the mother of the child, who was both CSG recipient and

[13] As mentioned, at the time of the study children under 11 were entitled to have the grant accessed on their behalf, but this age extension had only been introduced on 1 April 2004 and it is therefore unlikely that many older children, aged nine and 10, would be beneficiaries of the grant at the time of the study.

PCG, lived with the beneficiary child (that is, there were two household members). The largest household had 16 members– six adults and 10 children – and also the most number of children.[14] Both of these households were located in rural areas. In two households there were eight adults – the most number of adults – in one of these there were two children, and in the other there were six children.

3.2 How and what CSG recipients learn about the grant

To begin, an outline will be given of how recipients first heard about the CSG. After this respondents' perceptions of who and what the grant is for will be recounted. Linked to this, respondents' accounts of the documents required for an application for the CSG will be given, as well as obstacles to obtaining them.

3.2.1 How recipients first heard about the CSG

News about the CSG seems to have travelled quickly in our study communities. One thing is certain: everyone knows about this grant.

Welfare officials and the Chief Director of Social Security for KwaZulu-Natal note a number of means that were used to publicise information about the CSG when it was first introduced and also subsequent to this. The radio, community meetings, clinics, private welfare organisations, pamphlets, newspapers, PCs, tribal courts, community leaders, pay points, and the Minister of Social Welfare for KwaZulu-Natal are all cited as part of the initial publication of information on the CSG (Hunter, 2004:24). Yet while welfare officials refer to official channels, CSG recipients in our study highlight social networks as being the chief means through which information regarding the CSG travels. CSG recipients in the study mention only some of these sources as their original information on the CSG. Indications are that those who first learned about the grant heard about it from media sources (radio and newspapers). Family, both immediate and extended, are also pointed to as sources of information:

She was informed by her grandmother Slindile and her mother Thandi about the CSG. This information was confirmed by the community members who were talking about the children's grant. (ZU1 Msimango-Mbali[15])

[14] In line with the South African Constitution, children are defined as below the age of 18.

[15] The following codes will be used to reference quotations in the different locations/regions where the interviewees come from: Durban Metro- DM, Battlefields- BF, Zululand 1- ZU1, South Coast- SC, Midlands- ML, and Zululand 2- ZU2. The narratives of study respondents will be cited first with the locality/region, followed by the household name. Where there is more than one study respondent per household, the respondent's first name will be cited after the household name. For key informant interviews the locality/region will be stated followed by KI – indicating that the interviewee is a key informant – and then the affiliation or job title of the person interviewed. For narratives obtained on pay days the locality/region will be given, followed by the household name of the study respondent who was

She was informed by her relatives in Durban. She was told that the government is offering the grant for the children. They told her many people in Durban are receiving the grant and she is entitled to the grant. (ZU1 Bophela)

From these narratives it appears that social networks form the cornerstone of how information about the CSG is spread. There was evidently much talk about the CSG among family members, within and between communities. Friends are also indicated as sources of information on the grant. This means of information transmission seems to be highly effective as long as the information is accurate. It becomes problematic when this is not the case, as is apparent in section 3.3. A reading of the interview material gives a sense that everyone is either getting the grant or trying to get it:

Amahle said that when her friends started to talk about it she started to have interest in applying [for it]. (DM Madondo)

News about the CSG seems to have moved around quickly by word of mouth:

Siphokazi said they are living in the informal settlement. People there are poor and they are like this one big family. Siphokazi said if there is something that is happening to benefit anyone they tell one another … She said the information is easily spread in the community by people. She said there was never a meeting that was called to address people about the child grant. It was passed on from person to person by word of mouth. (DM Sibiyo)

Those already receiving the grant are credited with providing information about the grant to others not yet in its receipt:

Those who are already getting the grant inform others about the application process for [the] CSG. (ZU1 Bophela)

Some recipients indicate that they heard about the CSG from clinic staff and community health workers. Pay days are mentioned as the source of this information by one recipient who also receives an OAP. The radio is clearly also an important means by which information about the grant is made known, as the following narrative indicates. It is also clear here that the CSG is well known:

She does not remember where it all started but everybody knows about the CSG now. She says that it's a well known grant in the community. The people in the community talk

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accompanied and the term 'pay day observation'. For stories that were heard in a tavern, the locality/region followed by the term 'tavern' will be given. Finally, interviews with welfare officials interviewed as part of a separate study will be cited first with the locality/region followed by the term 'welfare official'.

about it. She heard that it was announced on the radio, informing the nation about the CSG. She says that those who heard the news on the radio were informing other people in the community [about it]. Those who have applied for the grants were also informing others about the documents needed to apply for this grant. She says that almost all the households receive this grant in the community if they have children. (ML Simelane-Zama)

Since this thing involves money everyone was talking about it in the township. (DM Madondo)

This ties in with the views of some welfare officials who point to the popularity of the grant and widespread knowledge of the grant:

It is very popular – there is no need to let people know [about the grant]. (ML Welfare Official)

The requirements are not that much. From the beginning it was the only grant for which many people can qualify. It has been easy from the start. Expectations were high. (DM Welfare Official)

3.2.2 Perceptions of who and what the grant is for

There are two strong messages that have permeated communities, via official outreach or through social networks: that the grant is for poor people and for women. The gender dimension is particularly striking. The grant is known to be for children, but also for children whose fathers are not providing support, either because they 'have no father' – i.e. the father is deceased, absent or not known – or the father is known and may be present in some way but is not sending money to the household. The idea of unsupportive fathers seems to be recognized as a social problem, and to some it is the problem that the government is trying to address through the CSG. One household respondent said that men were not allowed to receive the grant – that it was for women only. Another said it was for unemployed mothers.

For some men in our study households and communities, the grant was also seen as something for women, to empower them. This was not always seen positively, as it was seen as making women less controllable (see Hunter and Adato, 2007).

Across our sample it was widely understood that the grant is for the PCGs of children, and not necessarily for the biological mother. That the grant is intended for poor people is expressed in different ways. Often it is mentioned in terms of unemployment – poverty is defined in terms of parents who are not working. Although people do know that it is not for everyone, but rather for people who are poor, no one identifies a 'means test' and only a few specifically referred to a means testing concept – that welfare officials asked if they

were employed, the number of children they had, etc. This may be because people are not aware of how their eligibility is determined exactly. An interview with a welfare official in an urban area may provide an alternative explanation, which is that the means test is not actually applied in some places. There the official noted that:

A lot of people don't qualify if they disclose their income. For the means test we rely on information they give us. If you look at the files in the registry you will see that most say they are fruit and vegetable sellers. There cannot be so many fruit and vegetable sellers! We can't investigate this – it is too costly. The means test is not something we focus on. A lot of people don't tell the truth. Routine questions serve no purpose. (DM Welfare Official)

Leatt (2004) confirms this stance by noting that the means test is not actually being used to reject or remove a large number of applicants for the CSG on the grounds of too large an income. Others (Goldblatt, Rosa and Hall, 2006) show in their research that social security officials do not always apply the means test correctly, and Rosa, Leatt and Hall (2005) point to the fact that the application of the means test itself does not serve as a major barrier to accessing the CSG once they have applied. Leatt indicates that there is no standard verification of the documentation presented in the application process – it is both too complicated and too costly. This information is corroborated by the fact that in the first year of the extension of the CSG almost none of the CSG applications were rejected on the grounds of not meeting the means test.

The fact that it is for children is universally known, which is at least in part due to its name – the Child Support Grant (as opposed to a hypothetical Basic Income Grant - that might not carry the same message about supporting children). Everyone said that the grant is meant to support children's needs: to help with food, clothing, medical expenses, crèche costs. However, the reality is different, where the funds are usually combined with other income to support the household as a whole, where household poverty and illness make it difficult to guard this one source of income exclusively for beneficiary children (this is consistent with expenditure information given later in this report). For example, in the Cibane household, Gloria (the mother) says that "*the CSG is for Ayanda. This is the money to support the child, to buy food and clothes for the child."* But the household was observed to have used the CSG to pay for medical care for Gloria who was very ill with AIDS, at three points in time over her period of illness. Twice it was used to pay a traditional healer, and once for access to the district surgeon in order to access the Disability Grant (DG), which was later obtained.[16]

[16] At the time that the research was undertaken the Disability Grant, as well as the Old Age Pension and the Care Dependency Grant - all non-contributory social grants - were worth R740 each. The Disability Grant is received by adults with some form of temporary or permanent disability that is confirmed by a medical report. The Care Dependency Grant, also given on confirmation of a medical report, is received on behalf of children with a temporary or permanent disability. The Old Age Pension is received by women 60 years and over and men 65 years and over, whose income falls below the means test.

With respect to the age of the eligible children, about three-quarters of the households in our sample were not well-informed. People were confused about the cut-off age, possibly because the age eligibility has been changed three times since the grant was first introduced. Some people said they did not know the cut-off age. As one of the fieldworkers reported based on discussions at a pay point in the Durban Metro locality: "*All were happy about the fact that the age limit had been extended but there was still confusion for most about the actual age limit. Different groups said different ages". (DM Cambi pay day observation)* About half of the households said that the grant was available for children through age 14. This can be explained by the fact that in early 2003, the government announced that the age would be extended progressively up to the age of 14. Following this, large numbers of people were showing up at welfare offices trying to apply for children up to the age of 14, causing problems for the district welfare offices (Hunter, 2004). We found that many people had heard about this age 14 extension, but not that it would be a gradual extension. A number of people thought the age was 10, and two people thought the age was 18, possibly confusing the CSG cut-off with that of the Foster Care Grant or FCG (where the age is under 18). People seemed to have learned about the age cut-off from a variety of sources: many through word of mouth in the community, others through the radio. Curiously, no one mentioned welfare officials or social workers as the source of this information – perhaps if they had received this information via these formal channels the information would be more accurate. The news of the extension in age was also heard at the pay points.

Another message that comes through strongly in people's perceptions of the purpose of this grant is the role of the government in providing this support. Several people said that the grant was a gift from the government, described as 'something that someone gives you'; 'the money you get freely and you don't have to work for;' and 'something that you never expected – it came out of the blue.' The way in which people expressed this appears to reflect a recognition that the government is caring for people and trying to help them. The CSG has clearly raised the esteem of government in the eyes of the people we interviewed. In one case, Mandela is still given credit (either because he is still seen as the one responsible for positive changes or possibly people are confusing the CSG with the Mandela Children's Fund): "*the money is from Mandela for children because he cares very much for them*". (BF Ndlovu)

3.3 Documents required and obstacles to obtaining them

According to a checklist used at welfare offices in KwaZulu-Natal (Hunter, 2004:26), the documents needed include, where applicable:

- The 13-digit identity document (ID) of the PCG. If not available this must be obtained with a photograph and birth certificate of the applicant
- The birth certificate of the child for whom the CSG is being obtained. If not available the birth certificate must be obtained using the maternity certificate and ID of the parent

- The marriage certificate, proof of customary marriage or divorce order of applicant
- The death certificate of applicant's spouse
- Wage certificate of applicant and/or spouse if formally employed
- Proof of income of PCG and spouse; or
- Affidavit stating unemployment
- Expressed / implied consent form from parent where applicant is not parent
- Police report if natural parent, guardian or custodian is missing
- Confirmation that spouse is imprisoned or detained in an institution if applicable

Welfare officials were asked what documents were required for a CSG application. In all instances, officials stated that the ID of the applicant and the birth certificate of the child were necessary for a CSG application. To varying levels, officials were able to state which other additional documents were required for an application. It seems that in actual practice there is some flexibility in how the requirements listed in the checklist above are handled. If the applicant is not the parent and the parent's whereabouts are known, an express consent form is required from the parent. If the parent's whereabouts are not known or if they are deceased, an implied consent form needs to be filled out, signed by the person applying for the grant and a commissioner of oaths. Hunter (2004:27) notes that the welfare officials interviewed are not the same people actually receiving the applications, hence this view might not be entirely reliable. However, our household interviews are generally consistent with these reports from welfare officials, in their indication that while IDs and birth certificates are uniformly required, other documentation requirements do vary in practice. All household respondents mentioned the ID and the birth certificate. Two said that a photocopy of the ID was accepted (though officially it is not supposed to be). It is interesting that no one mentioned any documents related to income or employment, i.e. a means test. With respect to other documentation it appears that welfare workers taking applications do not want to make the process too onerous for applicants. This may be a positive indication, though it could also be argued that fraudulent applications may not be screened out – a question of whether the government is more concerned about errors of exclusion or inclusion (see Cornia and Stewart, 1995).

All respondents seemed to know what documents they needed – or at least none said they did not know – which was supported by their explanations of what they used in the application process. More than half of the households said that they learned about the required documents through their social networks – not through official channels. This ties in with how the news of the CSG was spread in our study communities, as mentioned earlier. This would make sense since these are the people they would encounter more frequently, though one might expect more official outreach to communities than we found. Respondents mentioned various documents they needed depending on their particular situations. For instance, grandmothers mentioned daughters' birth certificates and death certificates to establish themselves as the PCG. Respondents also had various

stories of documents needed to get other documents. For instance, to get birth certificates or an ID, some people said they used their marriage certificates.

Many mentioned the Road to Health Card (RTHC)/immunization card in association with the CSG. The RTHC promotes parental or caregiver knowledge of and responsibility about the development of the child, and if regularly updated it can provide early warning about undernutrition of the child (Lund, 2002). One CSG recipient explains what the card is used for:

It is a card used for immunization and readings of the child's growth are done on the card. The card helps to monitor the child's growth… the nursing staff can read the card and realize that the child is losing weight and that makes them realize that the child is having health problems. (SC Kuzwayo-Sibongile)

Interviewees at some welfare offices indicated that the RTHC had not been used in practice since 2000 and 2001 when it was removed off the list of document requirements for a CSG application, largely to increase uptake of the grant, since it had become too great an obstacle in the application process. Goldblatt, Rosa and Hall (2006) indicate that this amendment to the 1998 regulations was made earlier, in June 1999. Currently, the card may be required with a CSG application to verify if the applicant is the parent of the child (Hunter, 2004). Two recipients stated that they had taken along the RTHC as one of the documents submitted when applying for the CSG. One quarter of recipients stated that they had used the card to apply for the child's birth certificate.

Knowledge of the RTHC, especially its uses, seems to be strikingly high at least among our small sample, and it seems that the card is being used in practice with regard to health care. It is learned about at health facilities before and after giving birth. It is used when visiting health facilities and by the PCG to check on the child's health. One of the aims of the Lund Committee on Child and Family Support (see Lund Committee on Child and Family Support, 1996) was to promote and reinforce the regular use and ownership of the card by attaching the award of the CSG to the possession of an updated RTHC.[17] It seems that this aim is being achieved despite it not being a requirement in a CSG application.

In some cases the RTHC was used to obtain a child's birth certificate, and this may be the main use of it currently, although in one case a parent was able to obtain a birth certificate using the hospital discharge letter. With respect to fathers, people mentioned needing the husband's ID or death certificate. One respondent said that in applying for the birth certificate, she just supplied the father's name and did not need his ID.

[17] The link between the CSG and the RTHC, and the decision to delink, are significant because it was the only 'conditionality' placed on households. Conditionalities are used to provide incentives to change behaviour; for example, participation in health, nutrition and education services (see for example, Mexico's Progresa (Adato, Coady and Ruel, 2000).

Despite apparent efforts of welfare officials to facilitate the application process, the case studies reveal many trials that applicants face in getting the required documentation. Welfare officials make the point that if a parent does not apply for a birth certificate when the child is born, it is much more difficult to obtain at a later time (Hunter, 2004:27). There are various reasons why people do not have them. In the case of young women who have migrated far from their rural home to urban areas, some give birth outside of hospitals and thus do not have IDs or birth certificates for the children. According to an account given in the Durban Metro locality, if they go to the clinics after they give birth they are 'chased away' and there is no record of the child being born. Most problems with documentation, however, lie in the complications of relationships in the context of mobility and fragmented families. Fathers often cannot be located in order to obtain their documents (less common but also mentioned is where mothers disappear). If the mother and father die or can not be located, and the child is with the grandparents, (a situation not uncommon in the context of AIDS), grandparents may be unable to obtain any documents for the child. In the Ntini household in the Zululand locality 2, the PCG was the child's grandmother, and did not have either parent's ID:

The mother had dumped the children and left them to fend for themselves … The welfare department was adamant that she (the grandmother) get the mother's ID in order to process the application. She explained that she was having serious problems trying to support the children, hence the decision to apply for the grant. The child's father was her son but had also disappeared. He was not supporting [them]. She then decided to apply for the grant in order to ease the financial burden. (ZU2 Ntini)

In this household, the children had decided on their own to relocate to their grandmother because "*they were starving.*" Eventually, the welfare officials authorized her to go ahead with the application, but requested that she get an affidavit from the local induna (chief). Interviews with welfare officials (Hunter, 2004:28) confirm that if a mother leaves the child in someone else's care without a birth certificate, it is very difficult to register the child for the CSG.

One complicating factor that arose several times was the matching of parent and children's names. Different names may appear on a given document: maiden name, married name for mothers, mother's or father's name for children. In one household, a biological mother had trouble proving this status, because her surname on her ID was different from the child's surname on the birth certificate. In another case the mother needed an ID with her maiden name, in order to match the child's name. In a third case, the name of the child's father on the immunization card did not match the name on the father's ID:

To apply for the birth certificates of the children, they needed the immunisation card and the ID book of the mother at Home Affairs. She had a problem with Home Affairs to get the birth certificate of Andile, her child. She made a mistake in the immunisation card for Andile. The name of Andile's father, written in the immunisation card was not similar to the one written in Mandla's ID book. The Home Affairs officials claimed that Mandla

is not the real father of Andile because of the different names written in these two documents... They needed her ID book, immunisation card and the marriage certificate to get the birth certificate of the children…It was a struggle to get Andile's birth certificate. She was advised by the people to get a new immunisation card but the health providers refused at the hospital. They chased her away and asked her if she was mad when she used a different name from Mandla's ID book. (ZU1 Msimango)

This recipient was advised to get an affidavit from the police station, but did not do this – possibly people are hesitant to engage with the police if they can avoid it. She was then advised to get a baptismal certificate from the pastor, for which she paid R8. With this she was able to get the birth certificate for Andile.

Establishing testimony of relationship via an affidavit is a salient theme in the interviews – people often do not have the required documents and have to establish their eligible status by whatever means they can. Clearly, there is a new role being played by various local authorities in this regard. School principals, indunas, police and pastors were mentioned as sources of affidavits:

The mother of the child could not be found and, hence the need for the welfare office to send her to the induna as well so that he could be the witness: to make sure that Sanile was known in the area … the induna's role was crucial. (ZU2 Ntini)

This implies a new source of power for these individuals. It also potentially implies a new source of patronage – though we found no evidence of this occurring, it is a possibility that should be considered. In Goldblatt, Rosa and Hall's (2006) research they came across cases where traditional leaders were paid for signing affidavits. Also in this research it is noted that there are different processes and requirements relating to affidavits. In some welfare offices applicants are required to go to the police to affirm affidavits; at others affidavits are drawn up which then have to be affirmed by social security officials, community leaders, ward councillors or priests; some welfare officials unofficially act as commissioners of oaths at other welfare offices.

When asked if the documents needed were difficult for them to obtain, most people said no, although this is somewhat belied by the stories of problems that accompanied their descriptions of what was needed to obtain the documents. This is also a biased sample in that our main respondents were CSG recipients who eventually managed to obtain the grant – we do not capture many views of those who never obtained it due to challenges of obtaining the documents[18]. However, in explaining why others do not apply, Hunter and Adato, 2007 indicate that some respondents confirm the finding by Woolard, Carter and Agüero (2005:8) in the KIDS 2004 survey data – that the main reason why people do not apply for the grant is the difficulty of obtaining documents. They found a general perception that accessing the grant should be easy in the sense that people were eligible and entitled. What was standing in the way was the difficulty of getting hold of the

[18] We do examine some experiences where the grant was never applied for in Hunter and Adato (2007).

required documentation. These findings with respect to information about eligibility, of households, child age cut-offs and other issues, suggests the need for more capacity among welfare officials, so that reliable information is conveyed systematically and that communication does not rely so heavily on informal social networks where messages may become confused for a wide variety of reasons.

The main problem stated by our case study respondents was the length of time it took to receive the documents they applied for:

Gloria says that she didn't have any difficulties when she applied for the birth certificate of the child. It was easy for her. She says that she got the letter from the hospital, where she gave birth to Ayanda. They told her to go to Home Affairs to apply for the birth certificate and told her she was not supposed to wait for more than two weeks so that she can use this letter to apply for a birth certificate… She had to wait for three months to get the birth certificate of the child. (ML Cibane)

Another household reported a five-month wait to obtain a birth certificate, and others experienced waits of two to four months to get an ID. After this there is an additional wait to obtain the CSG. The result is that it may easily be six months or more between when the child is born and the CSG is received. If indeed the CSG is spent on food for children, and has the potential to reduce malnutrition (Woolard, Carter and Agüero (2005:1) found that CSG children below three years had an improved height-for-age z-score of 40 percent compared to the control group), then this wait during the crucial first year of a child's life could have nutritional impacts with long-term consequences.[19]

In addition to delays in obtaining documents from government, intra-household relations also present obstacles. In the Kuzwayo household, Sibongile wanted to apply for the grant but her husband refused to give her the documents she needed[20]:

She first went to the court to get the full details about what was needed to apply. She then went back home and informed her husband. His reaction was… too violent, negative. He refused to give her the documents. He took away the marriage certificate, birth certificate for the child and their two identity documents. She did not really want to apply for the CSG but the economic situation at home was not good. She thought the money would help the household as well. (SC Kuzwayo)

A final obstacle is that obtaining documents involves a financial cost. The main cost involves transportation to welfare offices and Home Affairs offices in order to apply for

[19] It is now well known that proper nutrition during the first two years of life is fundamental to the optimal health and behavioural development of a child. Longitudinal studies have consistently shown that the impacts of growth faltering and micronutrient deficiencies during this critical period are very difficult to reverse in later years (PAHO/WHO 2003:8).

[20] See Hunter and Adato (2007) on intra-household gender relations for why male partners object to the grant.

documents. Some people cannot afford these costs, particularly since more than one trip is usually required. Other costs include those for photos, and in some cases for photocopies. Goldblatt, Rosa and Hall (2006) indicate that there is no requirement by law for photographs to accompany an application for the CSG. They also note that in their study some applicants had to pay for photocopies, while at other offices copies were made for them at no charge. Therefore it seems that there is no set approach when it comes to making photocopies of documents. No one reported paying money for government documents such as IDs, marriage certificates or birth certificates, though one person reported paying for a baptismal certificate and another as much as R20 for the RTHC in the Zululand locality 2.

3.4 Application for the CSG

In this section the CSG application process will be outlined. Respondents' views on welfare offices, help received with making applications, bribes paid to get the CSG, the role of social workers in investigating applications, and reapplication for the CSG once it is no longer received will all be reviewed using study findings.

3.4.1 Welfare offices where applications are made

Most of the respondents in our study applied for the grant at their nearest welfare office. Those that did not applied further away, either because they experienced difficulties applying at the local office (long queues and a lack of efficiency at welfare offices are cited in most of these cases), or because they heard that it is easier to apply at another office, despite the fact that this was usually a fair bit further away, than at the nearest welfare office. These applicants pay more for transport but are rewarded with a quicker application process, which is clearly of more value to these applicants than the additional transport money that it costs.

Most applicants required transport money to get to the welfare office, while two applicants were able to walk to their local welfare office to make their application. There are a range of transport costs – from as little as R4 for a return trip to as much as R72 (in current prices). Some recipients state that they chose the closest welfare office because it is easiest to get to. Our respondents mentioned some aspects of getting to welfare offices as not being easy: having to catch multiple taxis, having to wake up early to catch transport and waiting for transport – in one case a recipient in the Zululand locality 2 had to wait for two hours to catch a bus. Most say that it is easy to get to the welfare office if money is available for transport, but that it presents a hardship if money is scarce, which is likely to be the case in poor households:

She said it is easy for someone who has money. During the time she applied for the CSG she had no money. Her husband was not working. She did not have money for transport. She had to borrow the transport money. (DM Sangweni)

This narrative indicates that for some, transport costs to get to welfare offices may hinder applications for the grant. Leatt (2003) includes access costs, such as transportation costs, in her list of barriers to accessing the CSG. With regard to the length of wait at welfare offices, for some recipients the wait takes no more than a day, while in some rural areas all respondents note that they had to visit the welfare office for a number of days before they were able to see a welfare clerk and fill out their application. On these days they had to wait for many hours (usually the whole day) – before being forced to return again. In two rural research sites the usual scenario is as follows: an applicant arrives at the welfare office in the early hours of the morning (or has slept over from night before), stands in the queue all day and is usually forced to go home at the end of the day when the office closes, without having seen a welfare clerk because of long queues. The applicant returns on numerous days and a similar situation unfolds. Eventually she gets to see a clerk and is able to complete her application. The following narrative gives an example of this:

On most occasions she would wait in the queue for more than eight hours, having arrived around five or six in the morning, and by the time she reached the office doors they would be told to come back the following day. Sometimes, they would be told while waiting at the gate that only a certain number of people would be admitted. There was an occasion when she slept at the gate from 23h00 and the following day they would still not be admitted as only 40 people were to be admitted. (SC Kuzwayo-Zanele)

According to welfare officials interviewed, different welfare offices have different operating systems in place with regard to grant applications (see Hunter, 2004), and it is not clear to what extent these systems contribute towards problems such as long queues. For instance, at some offices applicants for any type of grant can come for their application on any day of the week, while other offices specify on which day applicants for specific grants or applicants from specific areas may come to make an application. Moreover, welfare officials identified a number of difficulties at welfare offices that impact on their functioning. At some offices power cuts were mentioned and at all welfare offices a shortage of computers, staff shortages (especially a shortage of staff to take applications and capture information on computers) and transport shortages were noted as obstacles to welfare grant administration (ibid). Again it is not clear to what extent these contribute towards the problem of long queues at welfare offices, but it is likely that staff shortages in particular have played a role in frequently cited long queues. Others (for example, Goldblatt, Rosa and Hall, 2006; Rosa and Mpokotho, 2004) too point to the need for an increase in the number of staff at welfare offices to take applications as well as their capacity improvement.

Suspected reasons given for long waits by recipients include understaffing at welfare offices, and one respondent notes that welfare clerks at a particular office work slowly

with no consideration for the fact that there are large numbers of people waiting in queues to apply:

She had been at the welfare offices for about six to seven hours. She arrived in the morning and left the welfare offices very late. She says it was full and things went very slowly and the welfare officials were doing things very slowly. They had to wait for the welfare officials to come back after lunch. They (welfare officials) don't care about the people waiting in the offices. (ML Simelane-Busisiwe)

In our sample the shortest wait in order to complete an application was 30 minutes with assistance from a PC member, while the longest wait in one day was 12 hours – this includes not only the time spent waiting in the queue itself but also the time spent waiting to guard a place in the queue before the welfare office opens. This short description gives an idea of the time spent for some in waiting to make an application:

She arrived at 06h00. She was waiting from 06h00 to the 08h00 opening time to join the queue. She says that many people were already there and the queues were very long. She was in the queue from 08h00 to 12h00. (ZU1 Msimango-Thandi)

Most of our study respondents note that they interact with other grant applicants at welfare offices – long queues are frequently mentioned, which provides time for much interaction. Time spent in queues is substantial, particularly in rural areas, and keeps many from their usual activities, which itself bears costs. All of our respondents were receiving the grant and had therefore eventually been successful in the application process despite long waits, but these narratives indicate that the efficiency of welfare offices is highly questionable. It is perhaps not surprising considering the initial influx of hopeful CSG applicants to welfare offices. Despite these difficulties all respondents persevered, indicating that to them the eventual receipt of the CSG was worth the initial time, effort and money spent in applying for it.

With regard to the number of visits to welfare offices for a single application, this ranges from one visit (for half of the respondents) to five visits – although for some the number of visits was not stated. Although a few indicate that their application process took only one day because they had the required documents, those who visit the welfare office on more than one day do not seem to do so because they do not have the required documents. Multiple visits to welfare offices should be distinguished according to the reason for the visit. These are either due to not being able to fill out an application because of long queues, or because when they return to the office after collecting further information it is closed, or because they have been given the wrong information about an application.[21] The following story is an example of the latter:

[21] CSG recipients also have to return to the office to collect their payment card after their application has been granted, and this information is not included here. Respondents note that repeat visits are also sometimes undertaken to collect cards that are not always ready for collection on the date given to applicants.

In the Ndlovu household in the Battlefields locality, a recipient's daughter dies after having received the CSG card but before receiving her first CSG payment. After this her mother tried to obtain a death certificate, which took two weeks. On her first visit to the welfare office she explained about her daughter's CSG application and receipt of the card, and indicated that she would like to take over grant receipt for the children. She showed the officials the death certificate and the card and was told to go to another office (in the same building) to apply for the FCG. Along the way she met members of the public who told her that an application for the FCG takes a long time, and that she should rather try and get the CSG, since she already had the card. She says she felt angry and decided to go back home. The next day she returned and went to the office she was referred to on the previous day. There she was told to go and look for the fathers of her grandchildren. She was given forms to fill out but decided not to take them because she did not think that they would be processed, and she did not know where she would find the fathers of the children, since even her daughter did not have information about the fathers before her death. She decided to cool off for some time. After a time she went to a different welfare office, further away, and was able to apply for the CSG without difficulty on behalf of her grandchildren.

Here the incorrect information given to this applicant resulted in multiple visits to different welfare offices and much frustration for the applicant, as well as a delay in the receipt of the grant which was needed for the children in her care. Clearly the process of application is overwhelming and confusing for some applicants such as this one and in this case welfare officials simply add to, exacerbate and cause confusion, something that is completely unacceptable.

Moreover, while some welfare officials are noted as helpful by recipients, an observation at a welfare office by a fieldworker indicates that this is not always the case.

The behaviour of welfare officials left much to be desired. People were literally ignored and they (the welfare officials) spent much time talking to their friends who had visited them. Other people were able to skip the queue and got into the front because they knew some of the clerical staff members. (SC Ntini pay day observation)

It seems that help from welfare officials may be more readily available if an applicant is known to those working at a welfare office.

3.4.2 Help with making applications

Most recipients did not receive any help from others with making their application – it seems to be a relatively straightforward process if applicants have the necessary documents. Two study respondents received help which fast tracked the entire application process – one from a relative who paid someone they knew at a welfare office in order to

secure a successful application; another, who also received an OAP, along with a group of other pensioners was assisted with the actual application process by a PC member. The second story is outlined in the narrative that follows, while the first story will be detailed in section 3.4.3.

Yes, she was assisted by Mr A who was a member of the pension committee. She says Mr A was well known by the welfare officials. Msizi says there was a group of old people living with grandchildren, so they applied at the same time. They were assisted by Mr A to apply for the CSG. She says he gave them the information on what the welfare officials would need from them as applicants. For example, he was guiding them on how to respond to the questions asked by the welfare officials. He informed them that the welfare officials would interview them about the mothers of the children, about the whereabouts of the mothers and their occupations. He told them they should respond to the welfare officials by saying that the mothers of the children are still alive but they are not working …The PC member was responsible for everything; he was doing the negotiations with the welfare officials. She gave in all her documents to the PC member. They did everything for her. They asked her information about the children only and her personal details. (ML Simelane-Msizi)

Clearly the PC member plays a crucial role in the easy application process for this group of applicants, by intervening on their behalf and priming them on what to say – although there is some dishonesty involved, as he tells them to say that the mothers of the children are still alive but not working, instead of honestly stating what their particular situation is. Despite the dishonesty, this applicant receives the CSG without difficulty, confirming what the welfare official cited in section 3.2.2, that for the most part it is not possible to check out the information given by applicants. Nearly all of our respondents indicate that they brought the required documents and an administrative clerk filled out the application form while they supplied information verbally – this seems to be common practice. Moreover, some respondents describe welfare clerks as being helpful in filling out the application forms. Welfare officials interviewed note that an application should be completed in the presence of a first attesting officer at a welfare office (Hunter, 2004:18), and this confirms that the process for nearly all of our study respondents was the correct one. However, in two research sites, and three households within these, respondents noted that no help was received from welfare clerks in filling out the application – instead they were given the application forms to fill out and bring back to the welfare office. This is in contrast to official procedure, so clearly there is some violation of correct practice occurring in some welfare offices. Two of these applicants received external help in filling out their applications – one from an aunt who is an English teacher (because the forms are written in English and the Zulu applicant was not able to fill them out on her own) and another received help from a priest. This practice is problematic if the applicant does not now how to fill out the application and receives no help in doing so. This point is reiterated by a respondent who describes observing the following at an urban welfare office:

Duduzile said when she was there people were given forms to fill in themselves and some of those people were not educated. It was hard for them. (DM Cambi)

Evidently, for those who are illiterate or uneducated, having to fill out forms on their own presents them with a key challenge and is likely to jeopardise their application. Official procedure is in place for a reason and it is of concern that it is not being followed in all cases.

Key informants note that they provide grant applicants with help with following up on applications to see if they have been approved or not. This includes help from PC members and volunteers from a community-based organisation in the Midlands locality that accompanies CSG applicants to welfare offices and negotiates with welfare officials who then speed up the application process.

On the whole the application process seems to be relatively straightforward, with a lack of documents being the main hindrance to making a successful application – this was noted by both CSG recipients in our study and key informants. Case, Hosegood and Lund (2003) find the same: their evidence shows that children for whom inquiries have been made have come to receive a Child Support Grant, and there is no evidence of potential caregivers 'being thwarted' by the system once an inquiry has been made. Moreover, they also find no evidence that households are discouraged from applying for more than one Child Support Grant when there is more than one age-eligible child in the household.

3.4.3 Bribes and paying to get the CSG

Officially, no money is required to make an application for the CSG (Hunter, 2004:18), and nearly all respondents claim never to have paid any money to get the CSG. One recipient points out that it would not be possible for her to pay to get the CSG because she does not have the money to do so:

She said she did not pay anyone. If she were to bribe anyone it was going to be a problem because she did not have any money. (DM Sangweni)

This sentiment is echoed by a PC member in a rural area:

Miss O says that she does not know about the bribery of government workers in this community. She says the people of this community are very poor to be engaged in those bribery activities. (ZU1 KI PC member)

According to these respondents the logic is that they would not be able to pay for the grant, and therefore no payment was made to receive the grant. Yet, if payment was made it is also likely to be sensitive information to share, and therefore if this has occurred it is

also likely that it may not be stated. Both a study respondent and a key informant mention that they have heard that others do pay for their forms to get processed more quickly. This is what the KI has to say:

He says that he heard about the corruption, that the people have to bribe the welfare officials to speed up the process to get their grants … He has not experienced the corruption himself. He heard that the welfare officials will take half of the money when the person gets paid for the first time as the bribe. (ML KI Head of NGO)

Here payment is for an application to be processed quicker. Only one study respondent claims to personally have paid a bribe to get the CSG. She was assisted by her aunt who had networks at a welfare office in a nearby town, after having difficulty applying at her local welfare office. Long queues meant that she could not get to see a welfare clerk to get an application filled out. The aunt paid R500 to secure assistance with officials at this welfare office, and after receiving the grant the recipient has to pay this amount back to her aunt in instalments of R100 per month. This constitutes over half of the grant amount for five months with the result that the bulk of the money cannot be spent on beneficiary and household needs over this time.

Apart from this story, two study respondents note instances of bribery – one relates a story about others, another about herself:

She says that one of the welfare officials asked for a drink from her. She says that this is what the welfare officials ask if they know that you are getting paid for the first time. They know that you are getting paid for the whole three months. So, they ask for drinks. Ntombi says that she listened to her and also pretended to buy the drink but she knew that she wouldn't buy the drink. She didn't do that because she felt that the welfare officials are dishonest. (ML Mchunu)

3.4.4 The role of social workers

Our findings show that there are very few visits to the study areas by welfare officials, with only social workers noted as having visited study areas. However, this is very infrequently cited, despite the fact that these workers are present at all welfare offices. All but one of the welfare offices visited in 2003 had at least one social worker (usually a number) working there. Only two study respondents have been personally visited by social workers and this is to check up on facts to do with their application. It seems that social workers are tasked with investigating if there is a concern over grant eligibility. One study respondent in the South Coast locality was visited by a social worker three months after she started receiving the CSG, as some jealous people had reported that she did not have a child. Another in the Durban Metro locality was visited by a social worker after she made her application but before she started receiving the grant. The social worker tried to verify information she had given on her application. The respondent

believed that she had been visited because she had stated on her application that she is married but that her husband is not working.

From this information it seems that 'policing' by social workers is kept to a minimum. This is in line with what was stated by one welfare official (as cited in section 3.2.2 – that there are limited resources to enable investigations to take place to verify information written on applications. The impression that social workers are generally absent from the local areas is confirmed by key informant interviews, mostly with PC members, in five of the six study areas. In these interviews PC members are less concerned with the 'policing' function and more with the need for social workers to visit the areas in order to assess some of the social welfare issues within communities and assist those who are very poor or disabled and needed assistance but are not getting it.

3.4.5 CSG loss and reapplication for the grant

By and large most study respondents (three-quarters) have not lost or stopped receiving the CSG after receipt began. Where this has taken place it is mainly because the child exceeded the age limit. Grant recipients have to reapply if the beneficiary child reaches the cut-off age before the start of the next phase of the extension (Rosa and Mpokotho, 2004). However it seems to take a surprisingly long time for the grant to be reinstated once it is cut off, which has negative financial implications for CSG recipients and their families. In two cases it took four to five months for the grant to be renewed:

She said that it was a long waiting time and yet she depended on the money. (BF Dladla)

This respondent is unemployed and lives with her mother – who receives an OAP – and her three adult sons, as well as her eight year old daughter and a young niece. One of her sons has AIDS and she is HIV-positive and caring for him. The CSG and the OAP are the only sources of income to the household. It is not difficult to see that not having access to the CSG for four or five months must have had stark financial implications for this household. In another case it took nine months from when the grant was cut off to when payment began again, but we have no further information on this issue from this CSG recipient.

Rosa and Mpokotho (2004) recommend that children who are already on the system should be allowed to remain on the system to prevent the administrative process of reapplication and the resultant hardship caused to poor families, such as these.

3.5 Perceptions of fairness of distribution of CSG funding

In this section the perceptions of recipients regarding how the CSG is distributed will be outlined: who decides who gets the grant and who does not; how the decision is made and

how fair this is; whether some applicants are favoured over others. Respondents' views on dishonesty on applications, and finally, their perspectives on people who receive the grant who should not will be recounted.

3.5.1 Perceptions of who decides who gets the grant and who does not

In our study respondents were asked about a number of issues relating to how CSG funding or monies are distributed. The question asked was 'who decides who gets the grant and who does not'. From the responses it is evident that study respondents do not have much knowledge on who makes this decision. About half of the respondents were not more specific in their responses than 'the government' or 'the welfare department'.

She does not know about the decision makers. She thought that all the people who apply get the grant. She only knows that the money is from the government. (ML Simelane-Zama)

The level of government is not stated, although one recipient specified the welfare department in Pretoria. Some respondents who queried their applications, as well as PC members, claim to have been told by welfare officials that their files were in Pretoria. Clearly some incorrect information is being given to applicants and PC members, as the interviewed welfare officials indicate that the actual decision is made at one of four regional offices across KwaZulu-Natal to which applications are batched and sent. There the application is verified and either approved or not.

About a third of respondents attribute the decision about distribution of CSG money to people who work for government: government officials or people working for government in the welfare offices. Some say the decision is based on the information provided by the grant applicant that is written on the form. Others say that these officials do not make decisions, and that they only listen to the story and ask for the right documents – here it seems that some unspecified higher power is assumed to be responsible for the decision. In general there seems to be a perception that the grant is easy to get, as this respondent puts across in her response:

She said she is not clear on that but the only thing she knows is that once a person submits the forms, whoever is written on those forms gets the grant on behalf of the child. (DM Cambi)

3.5.2 How the decision is made and perceptions of fairness

Our study respondents were also asked how the decision is made as to who gets the grant and who does not – that is, what the process is and what the criteria are for the decision – and whether they think this is the right way to make the decision.

About a quarter said that they did not know how the decision was made. Some of these respondents believe that if the decision focuses on eliminating corruption and ghost recipients, this is fair. There is a real concern over corruption from these respondents and support for government intervention to prevent abuse of the system (although ironically one of those who expressed this applied for the grant in a way that was not by the books[22].) Some respondents are not more specific than saying that the decision is made by checking the application to see that the requirements are met, and here too there is support for government intervention to prevent corruption:

She felt it was okay for the welfare department to be strict because this helped eliminate the ghost recipients and these recipients were exhausting the state resources. Other people may not get paid because of these people. (SC Ndaba)

Some simply state that the decision is based on the information written on the application form. Relying on this is pointed to as problematic because applicants may state incorrect information in their application:

She said it is the right way [to make the decision] but there are loop holes because they do not check if the information that is written is the real thing … to avoid all the fraud that is going on, for people who are getting paid for non-existent children. At the same time that process can take years to complete. In the meantime those that are hungry will not get money on time. (DM Cambi)

The extent of knowledge of some aspects of the application process is surprising and noteworthy. There is recognition of the trade-offs involved if each application were to be thoroughly investigated, and a realization that it is possible to state incorrect information and still obtain the grant since the information on nearly all applications is not checked through investigation – something that a welfare official also points to, and something that is noted in section 3.2.2. Other respondents believe that the documents submitted (the ID and the birth certificate especially) allow officials to see whether the applicants meet the requirements or not:

She said she thinks the only thing that helps them to make a decision are the correct documents. Lindiwe said she does not know any process or criteria because they do not educate them about these things. When they got there the officials just asked for the documents. (BF Manzini)

Some believe that producing the relevant documents is the right basis on which the decision should be made, since producing the correct documents proves that someone is the mother or PCG of the child. Others disagree and point to the problem of applicants

[22] This respondent used an ID which contained her maiden name and she did not state that she was married and that her husband earned an income.

producing fraudulent documents, and that this is why documents should not be the decision maker. Again there is a realisation among some respondents of the fact that there is likely to be no further investigation once papers are produced, and that this is not fair since some fraudulent applicants are able to get away with it.

There also seems to be a perception among some of our study respondents that if someone is financially deserving of the grant they will get it. That is, the financial condition and level of poverty of the applicant make the decision about who will and who will not receive the grant:

She thinks that they make a decision according to people's financial condition. They offer this grant to poor people like her. She thinks that the government officials can observe if the person is rich or poor. She says they do not give money to the rich people. (ZU1 Bophela)

Interestingly this respondent makes no mention of the means test but rather believes that a person's appearance (whether they appear well-off or not) will be the decider when it comes to who gets the grant. This means of decision-making is regarded as fair because the poor are seen to need support from government in the absence of employment since the government is not providing employment for the poor. The provision of the grant is seen more broadly as part of government's strategy to help the poor:

She thinks that it is the right way to make a decision because the government is supporting the people. The government is helping the poor people if they cannot provide employment for the poor and uneducated people. (ZU1 Thwala)

This respondent regards the state as provider for the poor and needy. For others the grant is regarded as a form of child maintenance. These respondents believe that if the mother of a child is unemployed and the father is not supporting the child, or if the father has passed away, this means that the applicant will receive the grant. This means of decision-making is justified because of high unemployment, and because it is regarded as government's role to provide in this way:

It is fair because the government knows there is a problem of unemployment. It is difficult for unemployed people like her to support the children. She says that it's not an easy thing to support the child. There are lots of needs for the baby. (ML Mchunu)

The fact that high unemployment and the expectation for government to step in is frequently mentioned is noteworthy. The grant is seen as a tool in the hands of government as it faces the country's unemployment problem. Finally, only three of the respondents attribute a successful application decision to a combination of the economic position of the household (specifically – and incorrectly – whether there is someone in employment or not), the child meeting the age requirements for the grant and having the

relevant documents. This is closest to the actual basis for the decision on whether an applicant should be awarded the grant or not.

3.5.3 Whether some applicants are favoured over others

Most of our study respondents (two-thirds) say that they do not know whether there is any favouritism when it comes to the CSG programme.

Some feel there is favouritism because they know of cases where those who do not deserve the grant receive it:

She had heard of people getting the CSG and they did not qualify – for example, they come from a household with a higher income and therefore don't qualify. (ZU2 Mnguni)

It is interesting to note the reasons given for this by respondents – either because they fall above the means test, as stated in this narrative, or because they do not spend the money on the child. The former is something the state can try to control for; the latter, while not desirable, is not.

Some feel there is no favouritism because virtually anyone can apply and get the grant and the information they present will probably not be investigated or checked up on:

Duduzile said she has not come to a situation where there was favouritism. Anybody who applies gets the grant – whether it be granny, father or the mother of the child. (DM Cambi)

Siphokazi said according to her knowledge no one is being favoured because no screening is done. Whoever has submitted forms does get her application approved. (DM Sibiyo)

Both respondents feel that it is easy to get the grant and therefore favouritism has no place – ie. favouritism would make no difference to applications. Another respondent thinks that favouritism is not possible because the decision is simply based on the correct documentation being brought – that is, it is a factual decision:

No, because whoever brings the right documents gets the money. (DM Mkhize)

3.5.4 Dishonesty on applications

We asked our study respondents whether people are sometimes dishonest on applications,

and if so, why this is. A third said that they did not know about this:

Gloria says that she does not know if the people are dishonest. She says that all the people she knows who are getting this grant are unemployed and deserve to get this grant and they are poor. (ML Cibane)

Here there is doubt expressed that people would be dishonest because, for this study respondent, all who receive the grant are in need of it and therefore deserving. In contrast to this, a number of respondents believe applicants do give the wrong information on application forms. Some say this is because they want money or because they are poor or deserving:

She said yes, people are not working. They have families that they need to feed so they lie about having children who qualify for the CSG. (DM Sangweni)

Amahle said yes. She said she thinks that they are desperate for money. (DM Madondo)

Others believe that incorrect information is given on application forms, not because applicants are poor or undeserving. That is, they believe that applicants state that their income is below the means test when in fact it lies above it:

There are people who are dishonest on their application. The reason for that is they want money. They are calling it easy money. (DM Cambi)

Welfare officials too describe applicants giving incorrect information on their applications as being a problem. After an application is taken, two or three days may pass before the information is captured onto a computer. If the applicant has applied at another office, or is in receipt of a grant from another welfare office, the applicant's file must be sent for. The application process is then halted until this is received – it could take up to three months to arrive (Hunter, 2004:20). This points to some of the problems posed to welfare offices by those who give incorrect information when applying for the grant.

Other study respondents believe that some applicants hand in fake documents with their application forms, while others describe how welfare officials and false applicants are colluding on false applications:

She has heard that there are people who use bogus certificates to get the grants. Probably they work in collusion with the welfare people who know how to cheat the system. (SC Ntini)

A number of our study respondents indicated that they hear this information while standing in queues on pay days. Relatedly, our study respondents were asked whether people apply for the CSG for children who do not exist or in another way that is dishonest. While respondents say that they do not know about this, two-thirds indicate that this does occur but that they are not able to point to actual people who have done this (ie. they have heard rumours about this):

What is happening now is that people get paid according to the number of children they have and this increases the tendency to create ghost children so that they may get more … She has heard people at the queues pointing out some people who have no children but were already getting the grants and some would say 'so and so is in cahoots with the welfare officials'. (SC Kuzwayo-Sibongile)

Such stories also abound within communities. A PC member indicates that she heard a similar story from a social worker at the local welfare office:

She met the social worker, Miss T, once in the welfare offices. She was telling the people to stop applying for non-existent children. She told the people to stop lying in order to get the grants for non-existent children. (ZU1 KI PC member)

It seems that welfare officials are concerned about this and actively trying to dissuade this practice. A home-based caregiver in a rural area elaborates on this issue:

There is a belief that the people are getting paid for ghost children. They buy birth certificates from the Department of Home Affairs and apply for the CSG for ghost children. (ML KI Home-Based Caregiver

While the narratives thus far point to rumours about this, one study respondent believes that she knows of actual cases of applications made for children who do not exist:

There are one or two cases she knows of. People would talk about so and so and the suspected would say their children are in Durban with their fathers, but these children are never brought to the rural area. (SC Kuzwayo-Sibongile)

Again, however, this seems to be a rumour more than anything else. This study respondent simply concludes that these are ghost children from the fact that she has never seen them. One recipient indicates that this form of corruption leads to people not wanting to make applications for the grant:

She felt there was corruption and some of the officials were dividing the money. Some people are now afraid to apply because they feel their documents will end up in the wrong hands: people who use ghost applications and who use other people's documents. (SC Ndaba)

A key informant also points to the role of welfare officials in this form of corruption:

There are rumours that the welfare officials are corrupt. They also create their own ghost children on behalf of the CSG recipients. For example, it happens that you get the CSG for two children but you'll find that according to the welfare system or computer, you receive the CSG for four children. The money for the other children goes to the welfare officials and the affected people won't know about this. (ML KI Home-Based Caregiver)

Finally, a number of respondents express a fear of identifying people who are involved in such activities in case something happens to them:

There are always strong rumours that circulate about people who are being dishonest, getting paid for ghost children. But it is not easy to point them out even if one knew them. If one identifies them, the state may not protect the good witness. This may end up with the witness being killed. The people who are dishonest do so with the strong backing of the welfare officials and the middle men within the community. (SC Ndaba)

This respondent clearly believes that the state is involved in corrupt action. This perception, evident in a number of quotes in this section, reflects badly on the welfare department and should be of some concern to them.

3.5.5 People who receive the grant but should not

Relatedly, our study respondents were asked if they knew of anyone who was getting the grant but who they thought should not be receiving it, and why this was. Most recipients do not know of such people, although some have heard rumours along these lines:

No, it is only rumours. No positive proof. Sometimes one hears of such stories at queues. People who come from rich households, getting the grants. (SC Ndaba)

One respondent says she knows of someone who is receiving the grant but should not be because she does not spend the money on her child:

The reason being that she is collecting the grant and yet is doing nothing for her child. The child does not go to school and she is not buying any clothes for the child. (BF Dladla)

From this respondent's perspective, and in line with the original aims of the grant, if the child is not being provided for then the grant should not be received. Some respondents point to people who are earning above the means test and are still accessing the grant:

Some people are working and get more than the minimum wages, so they should not collect the CSG. (DM Sibiyo)

The perception of who should and should not receive the grant is inaccurate: it is not those who work and get above the minimum wage who are not entitled to the grant – rather, what matters is if the wage falls above the means test. This respondent is the same one who tells the fieldworker she is no longer receiving the grant after getting a permanent work position as a nursing assistant, which would put her income above that of the means test. Here there is strong disapproval of those who receive the grant but fall above the means test, as evidenced by her terminating receipt of the grant. In contrast it appears that this is what another study respondent is in fact doing. She works as a domestic worker, and says that she will not tell the fieldworker what she earns in case he goes to the welfare officials and tells them and her grant gets cut off.

Woolard, Carter and Agüero (2005:17) also highlight the fact that some recipients' income is higher than the means test. They find that 14 percent of children on whose behalf the CSG is received do not have grant recipients who fulfil the requirements of the means test. Instead, they are earning above the means test, and hence, officially should not be receiving the grant. Another problem discussed by Woolard, Carter and Agüero (2005:18) relates to the amount of income considered for the means test, which in some cases may include children who are not poor (Woolard, Carter and Agüero test this by using a poverty line of R322 per capita per month). In their study, 43.3 percent of children fall above the poverty line and yet fulfil the means test. Officially they are entitled to receive the CSG, however if the government's objective is to target poor children then large numbers of children who are poor according to this definition, should not be. In spite of this, a number of study respondents who answered this question believe that all of those who access the CSG deserve it:

She does not know anyone. She thinks that everybody needs the money in this area because they are all poor. (ZU1 Msimango-Thandi)

No. She thinks that the people who receive this grant are poor. She believes that all the poor people like her need this money to survive. (ZU1 Thwala)

3.6 Ease or difficulty of grant payments

The three fieldworkers accompanied 13 CSG recipients on the day on which they were paid the CSG, over their time in the field. Most of these accompaniments were to Cash Paymaster Services (CPS) pay points, while three visits were undertaken to post offices and one to a supermarket. In this section this pay day observation information will be combined with the perspectives of CSG recipients on issues related to grant payments. To begin, respondents' accounts of the length of wait between application and receipt of the CSG will be given. Information on where and how grant payments are made, on the payment process itself, as well as problems with payments will also be relayed.

3.6.1 Length of wait between application and receipt of the CSG

Findings from the KIDS quantitative survey indicate that the waiting period between the date of application for the CSG and the date of first payment was within five months for 73 percent of applications (if 'not yet received grant' and 'don't know' are excluded). In each year of application the majority receive the CSG between three and five months after application. More than 90 percent went into payment within eight months of application (Woolard, Carter and Agüero, 2005:10).

In the qualitative study respondents were asked when they first tried to get the grant and when they first received it. For those that know the length of time between application and receipt, nearly all say it took either three or four months, which is consistent with the KIDS 2004 survey findings. It should be noted that recall could be a problem – some could be stating the number of months they were told to wait and not the actual time waited – as appears to be the case with contradictory information provided by one study respondent. In 2003 the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Welfare gave a norm of three months between application and receipt of the CSG, and most welfare officials interviewed indicated the same for their welfare offices (Hunter, 2004:29).

One respondent waited for five months before receiving the grant; another waited for eight months. For this latter recipient in the Ndlovu household in the Battlefields locality, her daughter died after receiving approval for her CSG application, but before the first CSG payment was made. The granny then applied for the grant and waited for eight months before she received it. She was too scared to go back to the welfare office to query why her grant took so long to come through because she had had a negative experience with a welfare official when she first tried to apply (see section 3.4.1 for a detailed account of this story). Some PC members point to the fact that for some applicants the wait between application and receipt of the grant is way above the norm – six months, eight months, over a year. They express concern that shortages of staff in the welfare offices is resulting in delays in processing applications. One key informant regards this wait as the central problem with regard to all the grants.

Some respondents gave reasons for the length of time taken between application and receipt of the grant. One of our study respondents says that it takes a long time because the decision lies with the welfare department in Pretoria, something which a PC member also relays from what he has been told:

He says they also don't know what the problem is. They have been reporting to the welfare official that the people are complaining. The welfare officials also say that the problem is in Pretoria at the head office, not with them … The welfare officials say that they are waiting for the responses from Pretoria. (ML KI PC member)

Information from welfare office interviews indicates that this is inaccurate – in fact, the decision is made at one of four regional offices (see Hunter, 2004). Clearly, incorrect information is being given to some applicants and it seems that this is a convenient excuse for these welfare officials – the blame for long delays is then deferred to national government which is located some distance away. Some welfare office interviewees note the slow processing of files at regional offices as a problem in welfare grant administration (ibid:18), and this seems to be a more accurate explanation. Delays in payment of the grant are costly to CSG recipients as money and time is spent travelling to welfare offices to find out if grant applications have been approved or not – a noteworthy problem for those in need. One PC member points to the grave economic circumstances of many CSG recipients and the impact of the wait for the grant:

Grants of whatever form take too long to be paid out. In most cases people have to wait for three months. For the seriously needy people it is a very long time. In some cases the prospective grantees have to wait for more than a year. (SC KI PC member)

One study respondent indicates that it took less time for a grant to be approved in the past than it does now, which could be because of the increased number of CSG applications in more recent years.

3.6.2 Where and how grant payments are made

In South Africa the methods of payment available or places at which grant payments are made are cash payments at mobile units, at banks (via bank deposit), at post offices and at institutions (Hunter, 2004). In the qualitative study, two-thirds of our study respondents were paid by CPS (which has the contract to make mobile unit payments in KwaZulu-Natal) at locations near to the study areas – either on sports grounds, outside a local shop, outside a welfare office or outside a community hall.[23] In two rural areas this was the only payment means for study respondents.

[23] Hereafter pay point refers to a CPS payment site. All places where payments are made will be referred to as payment sites.

At the South Coast locality pay point a fieldworker observed that as soon as CPS vans arrive, people start to queue. The funeral insurance sellers and loan operators arrive at the same time. The CPS vans which contain the payment machines are opened immediately upon arrival and payment begins. The fieldworker notes that in two rural areas the queue system works as follows: there are two payment queues parallel to each other with a 20 metre gap in each queue in which no one is standing. The queue then continues but is shorter nearer to the payment vans. Security guards stand at the clearing. Those in the queue have to produce payment cards to show that they are eligible for payment. What follows is along the following lines (documented at the Midlands locality):

The people go up to these machines, insert their cards, do the thumb printing and the money comes out of the machines. Then the receipt comes out of the machine. The receipt has the information about the next payment date. (ML Mchunu pay day observation)

In addition to the next payment date, on the receipt is the recipient's ID number, the pay point number and the total amount paid out to the recipient. On this pay day in the Midlands locality only three of the six machines were working and this delayed the entire payment process. On the previous day an informal moneylender had been shot and this interrupted the pay process, meaning that some recipients had to come back the next day as all were not paid. A delay occurred on more than one pay day. Therefore, a number of those who were meant to be paid the previous day were not paid, and had to return on this day to be paid. Other research has shown that grant recipients have to return again after their payment day without having been paid, because not enough cash was available to make payments (Goldblatt, Rosa and Hall, 2006). Due to difficulties such as these in the payment process recipients incur additional costs, not least transport costs, through having to return again to be paid.

While not pointedly noted by fieldworkers in their observations, welfare officials interviewed describe bad conditions at some pay points including a lack of shelter, water, chairs and toilets. Others describe the service by CPS as being generally good but indicate that there are technical problems – for instance, faulty machines, late arrival of CPS and finishing payment late (Hunter, 2004:22). Our study findings confirm the first and the last of these. This raises the question of what accountability exists for CPS when their operations impact negatively upon grant recipients.

Post office payments are received by seven of the study respondents – in one urban area this is the only means of payment to respondents. In fact most payments made in urban clusters are post office payments, with one or two post office payments indicated for those living in rural areas. Post office payments are preferred by some recipients over CPS payments because of the option they have of not receiving all the money at once. In addition, at a post office some of the money can be left in the account and withdrawn on another date, not only once a month as with CPS payments when the full amount only is paid. Further advantages of post office payments are outlined as follows:

There were stories about the advantages of getting paid at the post office because they could open accounts on the spot, whereas with Cash Paymaster Services they would need to carry all the money, thereby opening themselves up to great risks (because they could be robbed). The post office also had the advantage that the customers could use both the book or the card account and with the book account the money was safe. (ZU2 Chiliza pay day observation)

At one of the post offices at which observations took place, recipients queued outside of the gates and were let in in small numbers at various intervals.

One study respondent, Duduzile Cambi, chooses to be paid at a local supermarket in the Durban Metro locality because of ease of payment – there is no specific day on which one has to be paid at this particular shop. Moreover, place of residence does not matter – grant recipients come from far away, not only from the surrounding urban area. No deductions for loans or funeral policies are made at this pay location.[24] Duduzile was not obligated to spend money in this shop, although this is the case at some supermarkets where payments are made, and the reason why Duduzile changed the supermarket at which she is paid. The fieldworker observes that there was no PC or any queue marshals present. As in the Midlands locality at a CPS pay point on this particular day the queue was very long and some grant recipients had to return on another day to be paid. The payment process occurs along the following lines at this supermarket:

Once one is inside the supermarket it is quick. You are just attended to by two people. To the first you produce your card and get your pay slip, and from the second person you take your cash. (DM Cambi pay day observation)

Upon revisiting the Zululand locality 1 over a year after this research took place, Thandi Msimango, a study respondent informed us that she was now paid at a supermarket in a neighbouring town, over an hour away, as she had had difficulties with being paid at the local pay point. However, Thandi did not have the transport money required to visit this other pay point. She preferred to pay the R24 to R34 transport costs that this trip entailed and be assured of being paid, rather than encounter these uncertain difficulties. This seems surprising as these transport costs constitutes on average 17 percent of the grant amount. Yet it indicates the importance of the payment process being problem free for some. At this supermarket a minimum of R18 has to be spent if one CSG is being received, and R30 if two CSGs are received.

[24] At most pay points grant recipients – usually those receiving the larger grants such as the Disability Grant or the Old Age Pension – may have deductions made to their grant for funeral policies or for loans, and this should be done legally and with their consent. The actual amount paid to these recipients is the full grant amount less the deduction(s).

3.6.3 The payment process: from arrival to payment receipt

Study findings indicate that most CSG recipients who were accompanied to payment sites come to the place they are paid either very early (around 05h30) or early (around 07h00 to 07h30). Those who come later have a reason for this: one study respondent was very ill and therefore arrived at around 09h00, while another came after 10h30 because she brought her grandchildren with her. Coming very early seems to be preferred so that a place in the queue can be secured. There is consistent reference to very long queues, and this is nearly always at CPS pay points:

I heard some of the people complaining about being hungry and they were still in the queue. It was after 12h00. They wanted to buy food like apples and fat cookies, and others were suffering from headaches because they have not eaten anything from the morning. I heard other people saying that they arrived at 05h00 but they were still in the queue. The others say they used to arrive at 04h00 so that they could go home early, but they say they can't wake up early because its winter now … Some others said that they used to sleep outside the welfare offices (where payments are made). I asked where the people sleep exactly outside the welfare offices. They said that it is not a matter of sleeping exactly, but they make a fire to keep themselves warm for the night. They also bring blankets to keep themselves warm. The others said that they prefer to wake up early in the morning at 04h00 rather than having to sleep outside the welfare offices. (ML Mchunu pay day observation)

Sleeping outside seems to be an extreme approach to securing a place in the queue but it shows the lengths to which some will go to avoid having to wait in a queue for a long time. Goldblatt, Rosa and Hall (2006) recommend that different grants are paid on different days in order that long queues be reduced.

One study recipient in the Zululand locality 1 makes an effort to look good on pay days. Normally she does not wear shoes, but on pay days, the fieldworker notes, she puts on beautiful shoes and clothes and does her hair. Clearly this is an important day. Some fieldworkers observe that somegrant recipients look like they do not want to be there – understandably it is not enjoyable to stand in a queue for hours:

When looking at the faces of those people, no one wanted to be there. They were there as early as they [could be]. (DM Cambi pay day observation)

No one seemed to be in a happy mood. It was hot. They were talking about getting their money and going. (BF Ndlovu pay day observation)

Few pensioners are seen in supermarket payment queues, or in post office payment queues. People in these queues say that it is because the elderly are not familiar with pin code usage, rather preferring to get all of their cash from CPS at one time.

For those study respondents who were accompanied, and where the time was recorded, the time waiting in the queues was between 2.5 and 8.5 hours without being granted any favouritism. Even the minimum is not a short wait. At CPS pay points not all study grant recipients wait their turn in queues. One respondent in the South Coast locality is slotted into the queue by a neighbour who is almost at the front of the queue. Although PC members are nearby and express anger at this, nothing is done about it. Another study respondent in the Zululand 1 locality goes directly to join the short queue that is near the paymasters, instead of waiting in the long queue that comes before the short queue. The fieldworker indicates that this respondent is well known to the security guards.

There were two observations of bribes to skip the queue. Fieldworkers note that some people wait outside the gate to the payment area where they pay security guards to let them in to be paid, without having to stand in the queue:

I heard other people saying that they can't pay that money to the security guards. They would rather go home later. They said that they can buy bread, margarine and potatoes with that money. They complained that it's the corruption of the black people. (ML Mchunu pay day observation)

From this it seems that for some of those receiving grants, the amounts paid to security guards –fieldworkers cite amounts of R10 and R20 – is not too much; for others it is and therefore is not pursued. Two PC members say that there are rumours that PC members are bribed to provide places in queues – both deny this takes place. One study respondent in the Durban Metro locality tells the fieldworker that she used to pay a male relative to stand in the queue for her until she took his place when it neared the payment area. However she stopped this practice when he demanded the amount be increased from R10 to R15, which she says she cannot afford. In the other urban area, in the Battlefields locality, the fieldworker observes such a scenario:

Some people were on the line for someone else or on the line so that they can sell the space for R10. (BF Manzini pay day observation)

Another study respondent buys a place in the queue from such a person, and the following explanation for why she does so is given:

Since Lindiwe and I came late she was forced to be at the end of the line. She said it was not easy for her to be at the end because she had left her two children with her sister and her sister had her own child. The only option she had was to buy a space for R10. She managed to get a space but the lady said she must pay first, and Lindiwe did not have money. She went to someone [else who] agreed that she will pay her after she got the money. (BF Manzini pay day observation)

One issue not often considered is child care on pay days and the implications of a lengthy wait for child care. Paying for a place in the queue is a way to lessen the time away from children who need care. Since all grant recipient are meant to be PCGs – although we know that a not all of them are, as detailed by the KIDS 2004 survey, for example – this means that a fair number of those waiting in queues will have the care of children on their minds. Some may have made other child care arrangements, others may not. As noted earlier, a grandmother goes to be paid in the late morning because she has with her her grandchildren, whom she cares for during the day. Other observations indicate that most of the sick people do not have to stand in queues but are allowed to go to the front of the queue to be paid:

I observed that there are sick people to be paid. I did not see them in the queue. I learnt that everybody knows that sick people don't join the queues but they go straight to be paid. I saw a number of sick people being helped to walk by other people. I saw the people in the queue shaking their heads and showing sympathy for the sick people. I thought that young people are sick, they look so thin and they can't even walk properly. (ML Mchunu pay day observation)

Asking that children wait in queues for hours is undesirable, and it would seem that CSG recipients with children are another 'vulnerable' group that should be among those who are paid earlier than others. Alternatively, Goldblatt, Rosa and Hall (2006) suggest that paypoints be provided with child care facilities, a more costly option than the first.

However it seems that the sick are not always allowed to go to the front of the queue at pay points. One fieldworker accompanied a CSG recipient in our study, Gloria, who was ill with AIDS, to the pay point. The fieldworker asked the PC member if the ill person could be paid without having to wait in the queue. The PC member agreed, but according to Gloria this does not always occur. The fieldworker said that:

Gloria (the study respondent) did not encourage me to speak with the PC members because sometimes they don't allow the sick people to be paid first. They refuse. She says that there was a time when Mr N, the PC member, refused to let her go inside to be paid. (ML Cibane pay day observation)

The PC member indicated separately that some people feign illness but are not really sick. Indeed, some grant recipients were observed to be pretending to be ill or covering themselves in blankets to indicate that they are in mourning (and therefore cannot stand next to others in the queue), so that they could get to the front of the queue. This conclusion was reached by the fieldworkers who observed this, because later they were observed to be well or no longer covered in blankets.

At post offices and pay points a security presence is noted, although not at supermarkets. At one post office the security prevent the general public from entering the post office

when grant payments are being made. In particular there is a heavy security presence that accompanies CPS to one rural pay point:

I think it was interesting to see the security guards walking all around the shop, around the paymaster's car, to make sure that they keep order and the paymaster's team and grant recipients are safe. I have noted that they were serious with their employment, checking all over the place. (ZU1 Thwala pay day observation)

It seems that the level of discipline at payment sites varies. At two post offices there is little control, with no-one in charge of marshalling, and a general lack of order, with people jumping the queue. At some pay points there is much control:

I observed that there were people standing in the queue to be paid as usual. I saw the two usual PC members … standing outside the gate counting the number of grant recipients who should go inside to be paid. There were security guards standing inside and outside the gates, carrying their guns. (ML Simelane-Busisiwe pay day observation)

At this same pay point PC members use their whistles to let people know that they should come inside the gates to be paid. The PC member interviewed in one study area noted that the PC plays an important role during pay days by keeping order in the queue, and by making decisions about who should be paid first. He believes that the sick, the disabled, the pensioners and women in mourning should be prioritised in the queues:

They need to educate the young grant recipients like the CSG people to understand that they have to be paid at the end. (ML KI PC member)

From the PC's perspective it is understandable that those more vulnerable should be paid first, but it is also not difficult to understand that this will not be taken well by CSG recipients who are not favoured, some of whom have jobs to return to or children to care for. According to some PC members, some grant recipients do not listen to instructions or follow rules. One PC member notes that some grant recipients do not want the sick people to be paid first. Some in the queue claim to be sick and demand to be paid first, while others skip the queue and demand early payment, saying that they are in a hurry.

Pay day observations also indicate that the queuing process is often not peaceful, entailing much conflict over places in the queue. Conflict between OAP and CSG recipients in the payment queues is also noted. Fieldworkers at some payment points observe young people pushing the elderly out of the queues, with the PC seeming ineffective in dealing with this. Some welfare officials interviewed identified this as a problem, noting that at some pay points the elderly queue from early, and the younger grant recipients come later on and do not want to stand in the queue but instead go to the front of the line. The following, observed on a pay day in a rural area, is an example of this:

There were complaints about the young who were literally pushing the old people from the queues so that they could be at the forefront. Suggestions from the old people were that the young women should have their own queues. (ZU2 Mnguni pay day observation)

Talk at a community tavern in the South Coast locality before pay day reiterates the above from the perspective of older people:

The old age pensioners started complaining about the school children who will be at the queue and will be frantically pushing them out of position to reach the pay point. (SC tavern talk)

Two PC members also point to the fact that CSG recipients push old age pensioners in the queues, and indicate that it is their duty as PC members to protect the rights of the pensioners who are PC members. One PC member indicates that some grant recipients are insulting and also violent towards PC members. This was not commented upon by recipients, so it does not necessarily reflect their perspectives.

3.6.4 Problems with payments

After receiving notification that their application has been approved, it is then necessary for future CSG recipients to obtain payment cards. Once this is completed, nearly all of our study respondents have not had problems with their first payment after handing in their applications: when they come to receive their first payment it appears to be there without a problem:

She didn't face any new problems. She says it was written that she should come in September to do the welfare card for the payment. The whole process of grant application and the first payment took her only three days (in total). The first day, she filled in the application forms and was finished with that. She went for the second time to get the welfare card for the payment. She went for the third time to get paid and luckily she got paid. (ML Simelane-Zama)

Not many problems are noted by study respondents with the actual payment process, although some difficulties were observed on pay days. One respondent had a problem with payment: the machine printed a receipt that says she will be paid in another area but she did not have the money to go to the other area to be paid, and therefore did not receive her grant money for that month. In other instances some grant recipients come from further afield to be paid at the pay point where they used to be paid when they lived in the area. The reasons for this are evident in the following narrative:

He says that the people are afraid and they don't want to transfer [their payment] to their new areas because they think that it will be a long process and they are worried that their grants will be cut off. (ML KI PC member)

This PC member notes further problems experienced by those from other areas being paid in this area, in that the machines sometimes reject cards, and these grant recipients sometimes have no money for transport to get back home. In addition this increases the length of queues and the duration of the payment process in these areas. One woman was observed to be concerned over not getting paid because of problems with her card.

Some difficulties are experienced with the amount of the grant received, but not in the majority of cases. In one such instance one study respondent did not receive the entire amount that was due to her in her first payment: she was paid some of her money and told to wait for her next payment in the following month, at which time she was paid the outstanding money due to her. Another recipient had loan deductions made off her grant, despite the loan having been paid off. One PC member states that this is a common problem that they are trying to bring under control.

With regard to non-payment, our study respondents indicate that help is not always received at payment sites. One respondent whose grant was stopped went to the local welfare office. Here they explained that she needed to reapply for the grant – her child was no longer age eligible, but has now become eligible because of the age extension. Two study respondents said that they received no help at the pay point when they needed it – one despite asking for help from the paymasters when only half of her grant was paid; another does not ask for help at the pay point (it is not clear why this is) nor at the welfare office because of a bad experience with welfare officials there.

Regarding the availability of someone to answer queries at payment sites, this is evenly spread between yes and no, which is of concern. In general most of our study respondents note that they did not have questions to ask because they did not have any problems at the CPS pay point. A quarter point to the fact that the PC is available to answer questions, but one study respondent says that even though the PC is available they

do not have interest and time for CSG recipients. (ZU1 Msimango-Thandi)

Here a limited relationship between the PC and CSG recipients is noted. Three of our study respondents indicated that welfare officials are available at CPS pay points to answer questions. In contrast, one study respondent notes that there is no-one who answers questions at pay points, but rather those who have enquiries are given a slip and told to go to the welfare office if there is a problem with payment. This is in contradiction to official policy. Welfare officials interviewed state that there should be a help desk worker from the relevant welfare office at each pay point (Hunter, 2004:14). A fieldworker observed at one pay point that this was not the case. Welfare officials attribute this to a transport shortage (ibid). Some study respondents say that they would

return to the welfare office where they applied if they did have any questions or problems. Almost all of those paid at post offices indicate that there is no-one available to answer questions they might have. One respondent who is paid at a post office said that she wanted to find out why she could not get her money on a particular day, but that there was no-one to ask. The respondent who is paid at the supermarket also indicates that there is no-one there to answer any questions she might have.

3.7 Pension committees and the CSG

Pension committees (PCs) are normally comprised of elected community members—themselves usually pensioners—with the responsibility for assisting the members of their community on issues related to the delivery of state grants—primarily the OAP. PCs normally consist of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and two or three other members. According to welfare department officials, PCs are the strongest partners they have, with responsibility for serving as liaison between the welfare offices and grant applicants and recipients, seeing that grant recipients are treated well at pay points and that they receive the payments for which they are eligible. Sometimes PC members check on approval of applications at welfare offices. Regular meetings are said to be held between officials at welfare offices and the executive of the pensions committees, to discuss problems and exchange information that is then passed on to the people in the areas in which they live (Hunter, 2004:17).

All six of our study sites had PCs. In two they were elected by pensioners, in a further two they were elected by all grant recipients, and in three by a general community election. The strongest role of the PC that is evident from key informant interviews with PC members in the study sites is that of helping out on pay days, mainly by maintaining order in the queues. They also serve a liaison role between the welfare department and those living in the communities, transmitting information. To a more limited extent, they also help individuals with grant-related problems—primarily pensioners receiving the OAP—e.g. helping if someone loses their card; if someone is too old to collect their payment; helping family members access outstanding payments or insurance when a pensioner has died; being present if a lump sum is paid out. They might also help out if the grant is cut off, or follow up where applications have been pending for a long time. Since PC members live in communities with applicants, they generally know who has been waiting a long time for their application to be approved. In some places they help with applications, while in others they only help on pay days. One PC member in the Midlands locality was of the perspective that helping with applications was the responsibility of welfare officials, not the PC. Here, field observations and interviews found that the PC is only active on pay days, not with other activities such as applications or liaising with welfare offices.

Most of the PC tasks described above pertain to the OAP. Aside from helping with the pay day queues, roles and tasks pertaining to the CSG are not well defined yet. This is consistent with the household interviews, where people said that the PCs mostly pay

attention to the OAP and have not made a transition to focusing on the CSG. There does not appear to have been a great deal of effort by government or communities to try to move the PC into a new role, though some movement has take place (see below). Seven of the 24 study respondents said they did not know there was a PC. Another four said they had received no assistance from the PC. Three respondents said they knew someone from the PC and had sought their assistance. One study respondent said she had asked the PC to check her documents before she applied; another said that a PC member assisted her in the queue when she had to leave early to take her child for a medical appointment. A third respondent who is also a pensioner said that a PC member explained the purpose of the CSG, that people who live with their grandchildren can apply for it, and use it to purchase food and clothing for the children. A group of elderly people living with grandchildren applied at the same time, assisted by this PC member:

He gave them the information on what the welfare officials would need from them as applicants. For example, he was guiding them on how to respond to the questions asked by the welfare officials. He informed them that the welfare officials would interview them about the mothers of the children, about the whereabouts of the mothers and their occupations. He told them they should respond to the welfare officials by saying that the mothers of the children are still alive but they are not working. (ML Simelane-Msizi)

This example is interesting in that the PC member organized for a group of elderly people living with their grandchildren to apply for the CSG. This suggests that the PC in this area still identifies itself as a committee to assist elderly people, even when dealing with the CSG.

A particularly strong view comes through from the perspective of our study respondents: that the PC exists for pensioners, and not for CSG recipients. This pervasive view varies to some extent by community, but on the whole holds true for the respondents in our study. In the Zululand locality 1, one of the household respondents expressed that she

does not have interest in the PC. The PC has not done anything with her. She says the PC is assisting the pensioners only. They do not have interest with the people who are getting the CSG. (ZU1 Bophela)

This respondent says that the PC helps pensioners in the queue at the pay point, and assists them if they do not receive their payment or the entire amount they expected—*"they are the speakers of the pensioners."* She goes as far as to say that the PC helps pensioners skip the line, moving in front of CSG beneficiaries (though as noted elsewhere, CSG recipients are also accused of pushing ahead of pensioners). A second respondent in the Zululand locality 1 also confirms that the PC represents pensioners and seems hostile to CSG recipients, shouting at them in the queue for disturbing the pensioners and cutting in front of them. The PC member interviewed in the Zululand locality 1 confirms that the PC represents pensioners, and said that they do not work with CSG recipients because CSG recipients are young and should be able to do things for

themselves, unlike the elderly who need assistance. On the other hand, the same PC member said that they will help CSG recipients if they have questions about the application process.

A CSG recipient in the Midlands locality makes a similar criticism of the PC there, that they represent pensioners at the pay point and seem to have an active bias against CSG beneficiaries:

Zama says that she heard the CSG recipients complaining that the PC doesn't take care of them and the PC doesn't solve their problems. They complained that they stand in the queue for a long time until late. It doesn't matter for the PC how long they have been in the queue but the old age pensioners are the first people to be paid. They say that the PC does not take care of their needs. They don't let them be paid even if they are in a hurry to go back to work. And the PC complains that the CSG recipients are pushing the pensioners in the queue". (ML Simelane-Zama)

A welfare official at one of the welfare offices visited in 2003 also notes that young people push in front of the elderly in the queues, as does the PC member interviewed in the Zululand locality 1. In the Midlands and Zululand 1 localities, there is a negative perception of CSG beneficiaries from PC interviewees and a sense that the PC is there to protect pensioners from them. The PC member interviewed in the Midlands locality does not dispute that they represent pensioners. He explains that since 2004 they have to include CSG recipients as part of the PC, but that the pensioners do not want to have young people on the committee. The PC is there to

keep the order in the queue for the CSG recipients. They make sure that they don't skip the queue for other people and they also make sure that they don't push the pensioners in the queue. (ML KI PC member)

As noted earlier, waiting in queues is a source of conflict. One study respondent even suggested that the police be asked to assist the PC, because they can help stop fights in the queue. Despite the complaints of bias by CSG recipients in our study in favour of the pensioners, the PC appears to play an important role in mediating and helping to maintain order at pay days.

In other communities we found PCs to be more helpful to CSG recipients. In the South Coast locality, the PC member mostly discusses the help they give to pensioners, but also said that the PC helps CSG recipients, in particular, the young mothers who are still in school. According to this PC member, they speak to welfare officials to allow the children to get paid quickly so that they can get back to school. The South Coast locality PC also tells them what documents they need in order to apply for the grant, and speaks to welfare officials when there is a delay in payments. This is confirmed by the Ndaba household in the South Coast locality, where Nomusa said that the PC was playing a prominent role in helping applicants access the grant and that two members in particular

"had a philanthropic spirit in assisting people who had problems of a financial nature". (SC Ndaba) In the Zululand locality 2, the PC is also active with the CSG. The PC member interviewed said the group advises CSG applicants on filling out forms and which offices to go to, and looks into delays in processing of applications.

The question of CSG beneficiary representation on the PC is an important one—including them would be likely to make the PC more engaged in CSG issues. It is likely that the form of election of PC members would affect this representation—in just two study communities members are elected by all grant recipients - and these two have CSG representatives: the localities in Midlands and Zululand 2. Interestingly, however, there are three that allowed all community members to vote, but these do not have CSG representation. In the Zululand locality 2, a committee member explained that they included a CSG beneficiary on the committee because they:

needed young people as well because the PC was also dealing with the issues affecting the young mothers who were receiving the Child Support Grants and other grants. They felt that she was a good candidate as she would understand their problems better. (ZU2 KI PC member)

However, this representation does not necessarily effect how responsive they are to CSG beneficiaries. In the Zululand locality 2 it may have—people there say that the PC has been helpful with the CSG. However, in the Midlands locality there are four young CSG beneficiaries on the PC, but it still does not appear to have been that active in supporting them. In this case it appears that the pensioners who had been longer-time members on the PC may have dominated and not allowed the younger members to play much of a role, concerned about change that might negatively affect the pensioners:

The new constitution has been established in 2004. It also says that they have to include additional PC members like the CSG recipients in a committee… He says that it is not easy for the pensioners to accept the additional members like CSG people in the committee. They have fear for young people in the community that they might bring the change which might affect them or the change that they don't like. (ML KI PC member)

In addition to extending assistance to CSG recipients, there are other reasons to include younger members in the PC. One PC member in another community points out that most PC members are illiterate and can easily be manipulated by welfare officials. The PC needs *"young and literate blood". (ZU2 KI PC member)*

One issue of concern to the PC members interviewed was the question of payments. They are not paid by government, volunteer their time, and have some expenses that are not covered. The extent to which a PC receives payment from PC members varies by study area. In the South Coast locality, pensioners are supposed to pay a monthly subscription of R2 to cover transport costs, but few actually pay this:

The constitution of the PC does not allow them to assist a pensioner who is not contributing to the PC, but sometimes the rules have to be bent. (SC KI PC member)

The PC there also receives an annual cash bonus of R700 (we believe from Cash Paymaster Services or CPS) that is used to buy meat and drinks for the committee at the end of the year. In the Zululand locality 1, people are supposed to pay R10 for six months, but again few do. There the PC member says that they will not help people who do not pay the money; though if they need help with a specific case they will pay the transport costs of the PC member. In the Midlands locality, the PC does not collect fees as they were advised by the welfare office not to do so, but say that in the past when they tried, no one paid:

They thought of collecting the money many years ago but it failed. Nobody was prepared to pay that money. It didn't work and the grant recipients were not interested. (ML KI PC member)

Although the PC denies this, interviewees in this study area say that something must be paid for help if one is in a hurry. In the Zululand locality 2 the PC charges R5 per month, because the members are spread out across a large area and transport costs are high. People do not want to pay because they are poor, but the PC says it can not afford not to charge and that they will now not assist those who do not pay. We only found one case where one of our CSG recipients had paid out a sum of money above what is supposed to be the normal fee. One study respondent said she had paid R20 to a PC member to help her with her application. There are also some small in-kind payments: in the Midlands locality, grant recipients buy a drink for the PC members when they are being helped.

PC members in several communities express the fact that they would like more recognition and some financial assistance from government for the work they do. One fieldworker observed that the PC member interviewed was frustrated by the current situation:

He says they are working for the government. So the government has to pay them. He says you can't volunteer for the rest of your life. You need to be paid at some point … He says that the PC is working for the government but they don't get any benefits like transport money in return. He says that during pay days they are there from 06h00 till late, sometimes 17h00. He says that they are old and they have to wake up very early in the morning. It is too much work for them and they get nothing out of it … Some of the PC members spend about R10 on transport a day. He says that its one of the reasons they are not active PC members. (ML KI PC member)

Some PC members point out that the idea of the PC came from the government, and it should thus provide some subsidy. When asked what else they need in order to be able to do their job more effectively, access to an office or meeting space is also mentioned, as is space at the welfare office on pay day. In one study site, one member said the PC

does not have shelter. They don't have a space for them in the welfare offices. They can't even keep their food inside the offices. They have problems when it's raining during the pay days because they are outside. They don't know where to hang their jackets when it gets hot. (ML KI PC member)

PC members in two communities discussed the question of their own clout. One notes that they needed *"more teeth"* –to be empowered to negotiate at higher levels of government:

In this way they could be able to avoid the laziness of the welfare people and contribute in speeding up service delivery. The PC would be able to report the miscarriage of service delivery. (SC KI PC member)

Capacity strengthening and literacy was another general theme, needed to enable the PC to carry out more duties, to stand up to welfare officials, and conduct investigations into grantee cases more effectively.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This report highlights findings from various sources, but chiefly the perspectives of 24 CSG recipients. It gives detailed accounts from recipients about their experiences with the grant. The group of CSG recipients for this qualitative study are mostly mothers of beneficiary children and also PCGs of beneficiary children – mainly grandmothers – who live with these children. However there are a number of interesting and unusual arrangements with regard to who receives the grant and who looks after the child that do not fit in with this norm.

CSG recipients do not mention the more formalised means of spreading information about the CSG that welfare officials state as the norm. Rather it seems that information about the CSG was mainly spread not through official channels but via social networks: by word of mouth, via family, friends and community members and those already in receipt of the grant. The radio also played a role in spreading the word about the CSG. Welfare officials refer to the sources of information on the CSG that they were involved with as part of the awareness raising campaign around the CSG, but it seems that the CSG recipients in our study received news about the grant once it had been filtered down into communities, at a later stage, and not directly from government.

CSG recipients in our study also shared their perceptions of who and what the CSG is for. All understand that the grant is for children and for children's basic needs, though there was some variation in perceptions of the type of household who gets the grant (female headed, unemployed, etc.) and in the type of basic needs that are meant to be covered by

the grant. However, while recipients know the grant is for children, the funds are not necessarily spent on children, but tend to be spent on various household needs, as Hunter and Adato (2007) show. There is a strong gender dimension to understandings of who the grant is for — women are often part of the explanation, expressed in different ways. It is also understood that the grant is for poor people, often expressed as unemployed people (though only a few mentioned the means test concept). The government is given credit for this programme and respondents in our study speak fondly of the government for this help.

Although there is an official list of documents required for the application of a CSG, in practice, the type of documentation actually requested from grant applicants varies. The ID of the PCG and the child's birth certificate are those consistently mentioned as necessary by our study respondents. Other documents mentioned were the RTHC, marriage certificate, father's death certificate or ID, and mother's birth and/ or death certificate when the PCG was not the biological mother. It is interesting that no one mentioned any documents related to income or employment, i.e. a means test. All respondents seemed to know what documents they needed. Most learned about these though their social networks—not through official channels. Although no longer required for the CSG, knowledge of the RTHC and its uses seems to be strikingly high at least among our small sample. One of the original requirements for an application for the grant was the RTHC, put forward by the Lund Committee on Child and Family Support. This was done so that the card would be utilised, and indeed this seems to be occurring in practice, despite the fact that it is no longer a requirement.

Where documents are missing, affidavits are used to establish relationships. There is a new role being played by various local authorities—principals, indunas, police, and pastors—in providing affidavits, potentially implying a new source of power. Is there a way that such potential practices can be curbed? A major problem stated by our case study respondents is the length of time taken to receive documents applied for – a problem that no doubt lies within the Department of Home Affairs. Between this and the additional wait to be approved for the grant, it may be six months or more between when the child is born and the CSG is received, with implications for the child's nutritional well-being.

CSG recipients also shared their experiences of applying for the grant. Most applied at their nearest welfare office, despite the fact that this is not always regarded as the most efficient option. Transport money to get to a welfare office to make a CSG application is in some cases prohibitive and may play a role in delaying or even preventing a CSG application, a finding that is pointed to in other research on the CSG (see for instance, Leatt, 2003). Due to long queues at welfare offices, some recipients had to visit welfare offices on a number of separate days in order to make their application, increasing transport and other costs. It seems that staff shortages as well as welfare officials working inefficiently and corruptly pose an obstacle to speedy applications for the CSG. An increase in the number of well-trained welfare officials would go some way to address this problem.

Most recipients did not receive any help with their overall application – the actual application process seems to be relatively straightforward if applicants have the necessary documents. It is official procedure for applications to be filled out in the presence of a welfare clerk – and most recipients indicate that the clerk fills out the actual application forms – however this is not always occurring. Some recipients were given forms to fill out on their own and return to the welfare office, which they required assistance with and were not able to complete, emphasising the importance of correct procedure being followed. This is disturbing as it is uncertain whether some applicants do not receive assistance, with the consequence that their application is not successful.

There are cases where applicants pay to get the CSG, although only one respondent in our study has done so. Another qualitative study recipient had been asked for a bribe by a welfare official and some respondents had heard of bribery to get the CSG, but these stories are infrequently heard. It is nevertheless of concern that bribery and corruption of any sort is occurring within welfare offices – an issue that should be addressed with some urgency by the Department of Social Development.

From the information provided by CSG recipients it seems that 'policing' by social workers is kept to a minimum and that social workers are generally absent from the areas in which CSG recipients live. This is in line with what was stated by one welfare official – that there are limited resources to enable investigations to take place to verify information written on applications. PC members were less concerned with social workers' 'policing' function and interested in social workers visiting the areas more often in order to assess the situation on the ground and assist with local problems.

By and large most qualitative study CSG recipients (three-quarters) have not lost or stopped receiving the CSG after receipt began – where this has taken place it is mainly because the child has exceeded the age limit before the next phase of the extension. However it seems to take a surprisingly long time for the grant to be reinstated once cut off, which has financial implications for recipients and their families. Other commentators (for example, Rosa and Mpokotho, 2004) have argued that children should be left on the system to prevent the administrative processes of reapplication and the financial impact on the families in which these children live.

Overall, with regard to perceptions of the fairness of distribution of CSG funding, there is little accurate and specific knowledge by CSG recipients of where decisions about grant receipt are made and by whom. Recipients are also not very clear about how the decision is made as to who should receive the grant, and a variety of incorrect options are stated. The level of misinformation about how and why recipients get the grant is striking. In other cases it is the extreme lack of knowledge about these issues which comes as a surprise. How is government to become fully accountable if some of its citizens are this uninformed? What does come across strongly is a desire for corruption and abuse of the grant system to be tackled and eliminated. There is also a strong realisation of the fact that it is possible to get away with not being truthful on an application, and again

disapproval expressed toward this illegal means of obtaining the grant. Basic need is understood by some as the basis for awarding the grant, with these respondents seeing government as meeting its duty to provide for the poor and unemployed through provision of the grant.

Recipients also give their opinion on whether some applicants are favoured over others. For some favouritism occurs with regard to CSG applications, while others believe the process of approving a grant application is factual. Dishonesty on applications is pointed to by most recipients as occurring and it seems that there is widespread talk about this in communities. However, there is little reference by CSG recipients in our study to actual cases that they know of – rather the basis of this seems to be rumours, albeit strong. What should trouble the state is the negative perception of the welfare department and its officials that appears to be widespread in some areas and among some communities. Overall, most recipients do not claim to know of anyone who should not get the grant but who is getting it, although some put forward reasons for why some people should not receive the grant. With regard to unsuccessful applicants for the CSG, the grant is pointed to as easy to obtain and therefore most do not know of people who have not had success with their applications. There are one or two stories of individuals who have had no success in their applications but these do not seem to be widespread.

In all, the length of wait to receive the CSG cited by most of our study respondents is in line with the KIDS 2004 survey findings – most receive the grant after three or four months. Some wait longer and this is also noted by PC members – although these longer waits seem to be the exception. Yet, again, these times of waiting present CSG recipients with financial challenges over this waiting time. Applicants are not always given accurate information about why the wait is so long.

Our study respondents also provided information on where and how their grant payments are made. It seems that in rural areas nearly all payments made to recipients are via CPS – but there are problems with payments (for example, not all payment machines are working), which mean that recipients are not always paid on their due date and then have to return to receive their payment on another day. This carries costs for recipients – financial, time, opportunity and other costs – and it is important for issues such as these to be addressed and for CPS to be held accountable for inadequate service delivery. Post office payments do not seem to have the same long queues as at CPS pay points – here the process seems quicker and simpler. Some recipients are paid at supermarkets in urban areas and this seems to be a new site for payment, more recently introduced. A drawback of this form of payment is that in some supermarkets where grant payments are made recipients are obliged to spend some of the grant in the shop – this may not be beneficial to CSG recipients as it may not be where they would spend their money if this obligation did not exist – and this should be considered at the policy level. Rural CSG recipients do not have as many payment options as those in urban areas. Generally post office and supermarket payments available in urban areas seem more convenient and accessible for CSG recipients. This is indicative of a rural-urban bias in service delivery, which should receive attention from the Department of Social Development.

Accounts of the payment process show the early arrival by most CSG recipients at payment sites. Long queues and long waits in queues are most striking. Most grant recipients seem to wait their turn in queues but favouritism and skipping of queues is noted by fieldworkers, and some bribing to do so. Quite understandably there appears to be a real desire to be paid early. The child care implications of having to wait in long queues are worthy of consideration, as are the implications for those who leave work to receive their payment. However, these situations are not mentioned by PC members as worthy of special attention – unlike the elderly, the disabled and the sick, and it also seems that school children are allowed to be paid early. Varying degrees of security and control are noted at payment sites. Finally, the point of conflict between the elderly (whose rights are protected by PCs) and CSG recipients over waiting in queues is evident as a problem that needs to be addressed.

Problems with first payments are cited infrequently and there are not many problems noted with the actual payment process. However, where CSG recipients do experience problems it appears that there is often no welfare official available at payment sites to assist grant recipients, contrary to official procedure. This absence is certainly found at supermarkets and post offices, and some CPS pay points, and needs to be addressed by the Department of Social Development. For the most part those who have problems indicate that they have to go to the nearest welfare office, which usually requires additional costs, not least for transport. This suggests that there is much improvement required in this service that is promised by welfare offices.

Overall it seems that the administration of the grant is ‘working’ in a number of ways but there are areas of operation and functioning that need to be urgently addressed, chiefly by the Department of Social Development, if the grant is to not financially burden but financially benefit those who apply for it and are in its receipt.

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